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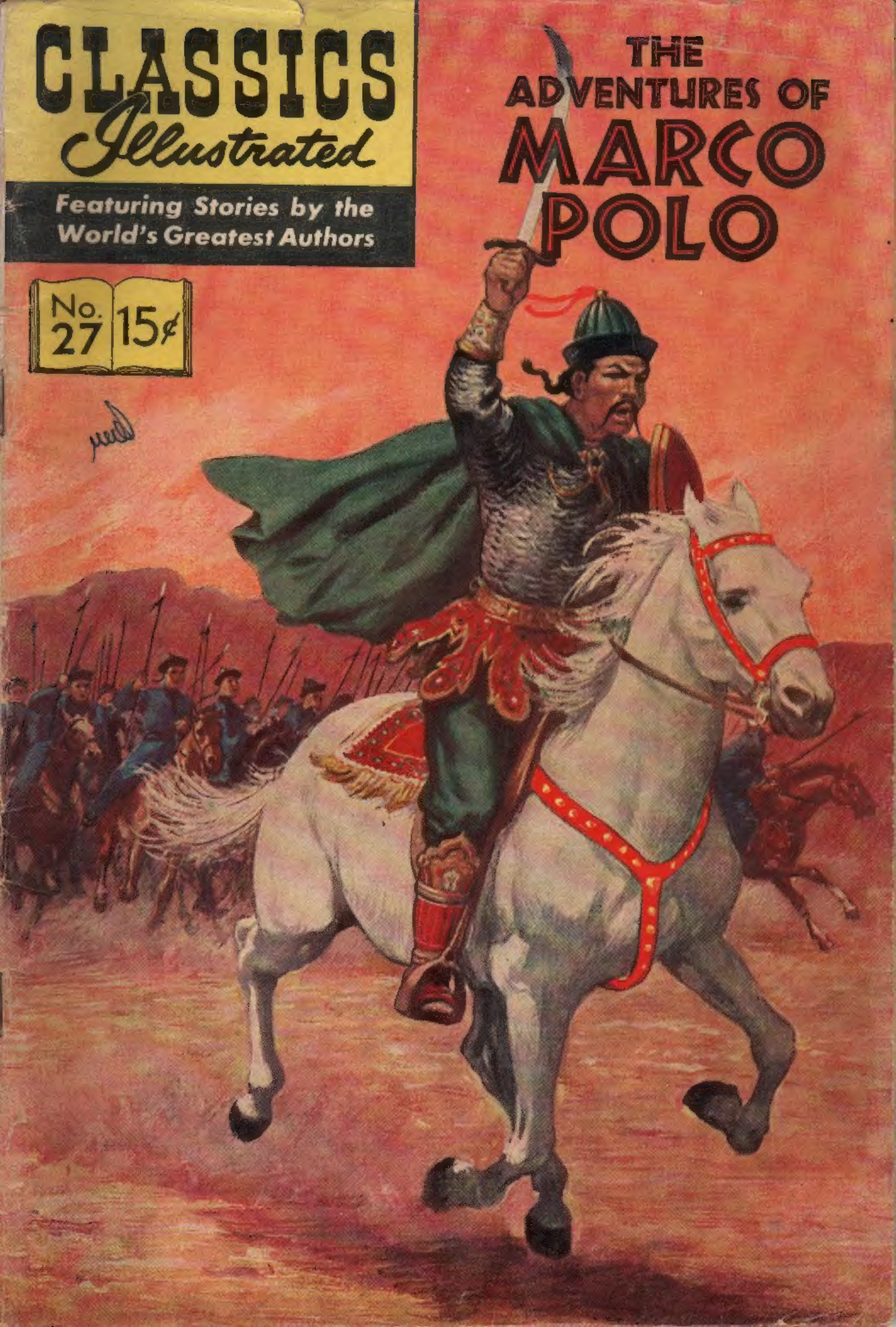
No. 27 15¢

THE ADVENTURES OF MARCO POLO



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WHO AM I?

I am a famous literary character. Can you guess my name from the clues below? Rate your familiarity with me as follows: If you can identify me from CLUE I, your score is superior; from CLUE II — excellent; from CLUE III—very good; from CLUE IV—good; from CLUE V—fair. If after CLUE V you still cannot identify me, I suggest you read the exciting story in which I appear.

CLUE I: I was born in a swamp. When I was just a baby, I learned my first lesson in survival--lay low and say nothing, whatever happens.

CLUE II: I learned many tricks and lessons from my mother. The most brilliant was how to lead a dog on a straightaway chase, letting him come quite close, then, keeping one hop ahead, run him full tilt into a breast high barbed wire fence.

CLUE III: One day I saw a stranger hopping toward me. A new feeling rushed over me--a boiling anger to see a stranger in my swamp. Furiously I rushed at the newcomer. But he was bigger and heavier than I and I was no match for him. I was forced to flee.

CLUE IV: From that day on the big stranger tried a dozen times a day to sneak up and catch me. Then one day I heard a hound in the swamp. Deliberately I crossed the dog's view and the chase was on. I led him to the nest where I knew my enemy would be. The big stranger found himself caught between myself and the hound. Then the hound was upon him, and it was too late to escape.

CLUE V: Once again I was master of the swamp. Then winter came and with it freezing weather. One night as my mother and I were huddled under a brush pile, a fox found us. We darted out into the blinding storm. The fox charged after my mother. She reached a pond and, having no chance to turn, plunged in. The fox turned back and came after me. The exciting climax of my story can be found in *Wild Animals I Have Known* by Ernest Thompson Seton.

RAGGYLUG

CLASSICS *Illustrated* . . . APRIL, 1946 . . . Number 27 . . . Published monthly except February, May, August and November by GILBERTON COMPANY, 510 Sixth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y. . . . Subscription, $1.50 for 10 issues . . . Entered as second-class matter March 10, 1943, Reentered as second-class matter March 10, 1944, at the post office of New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. ALBERT W. RAYMOND, Editor, HARRY M. ADLER, Managing Editor.
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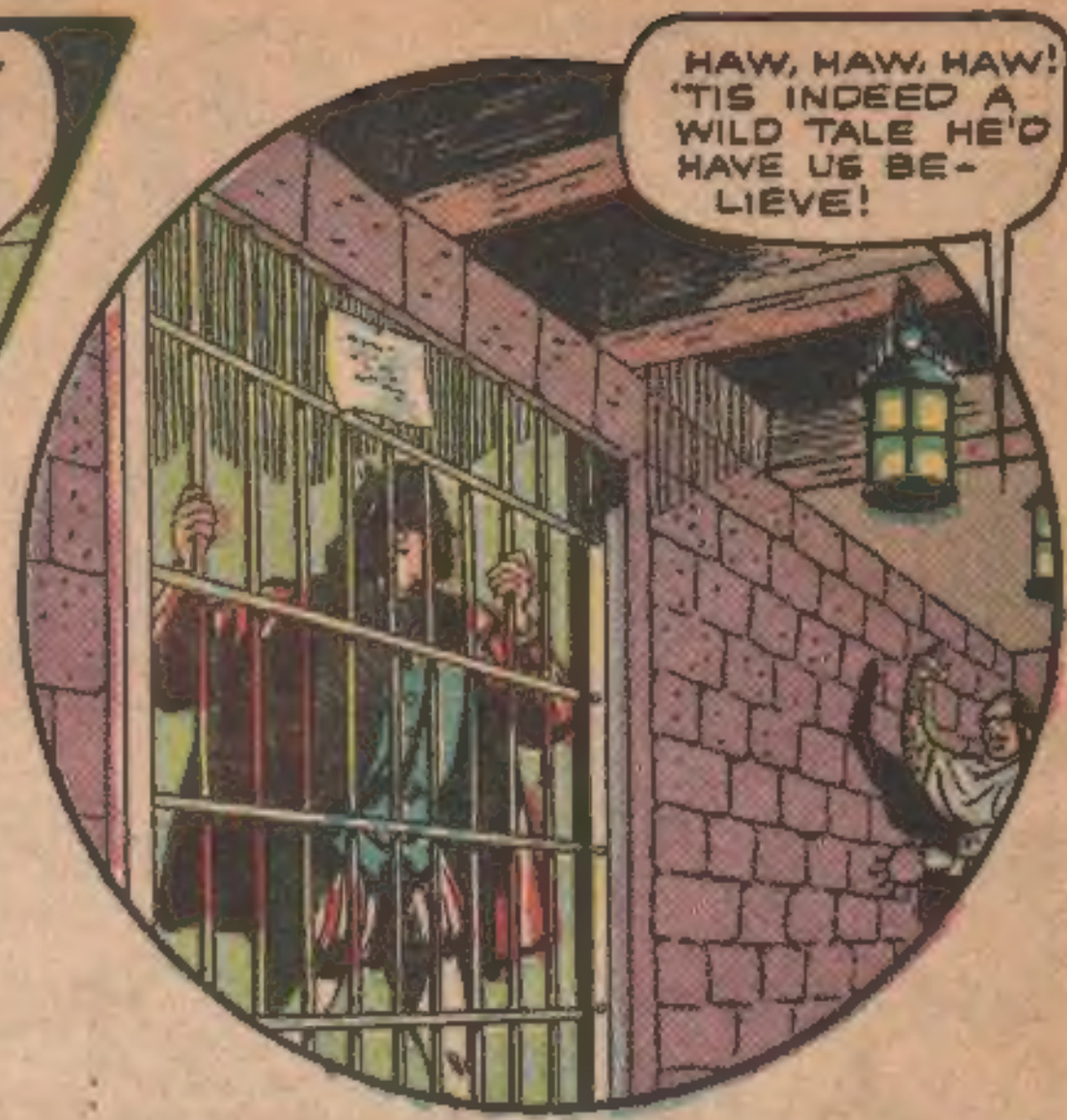
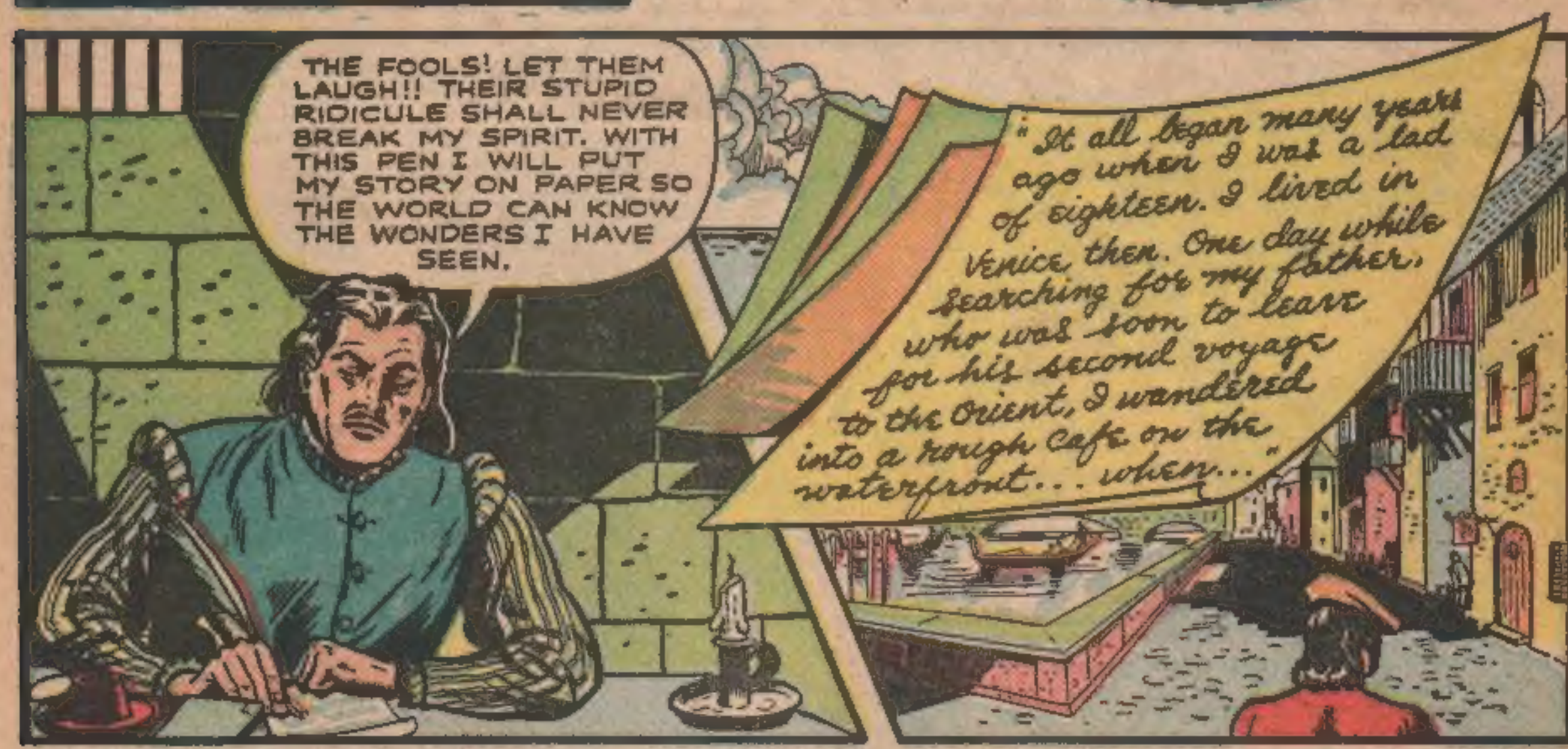
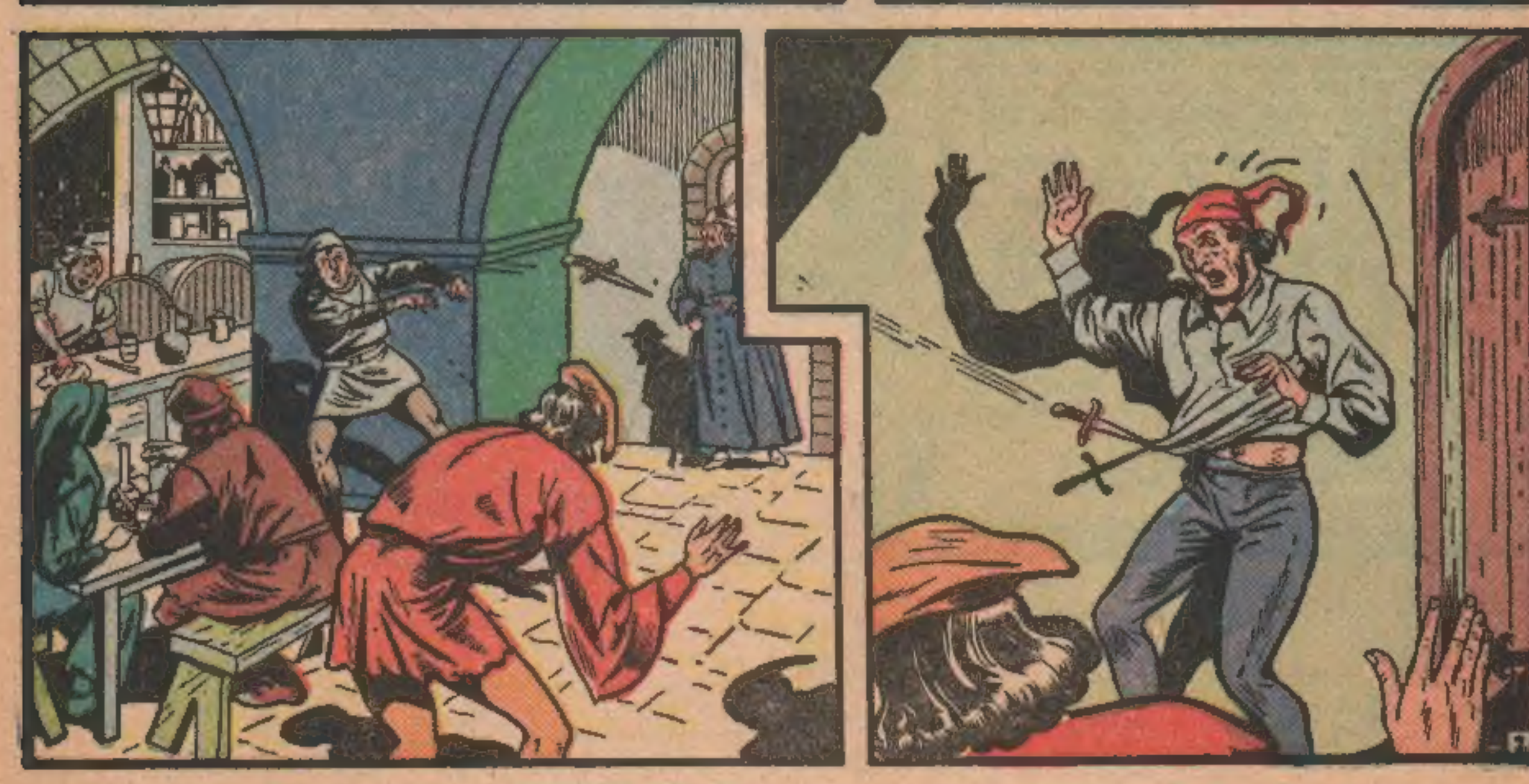
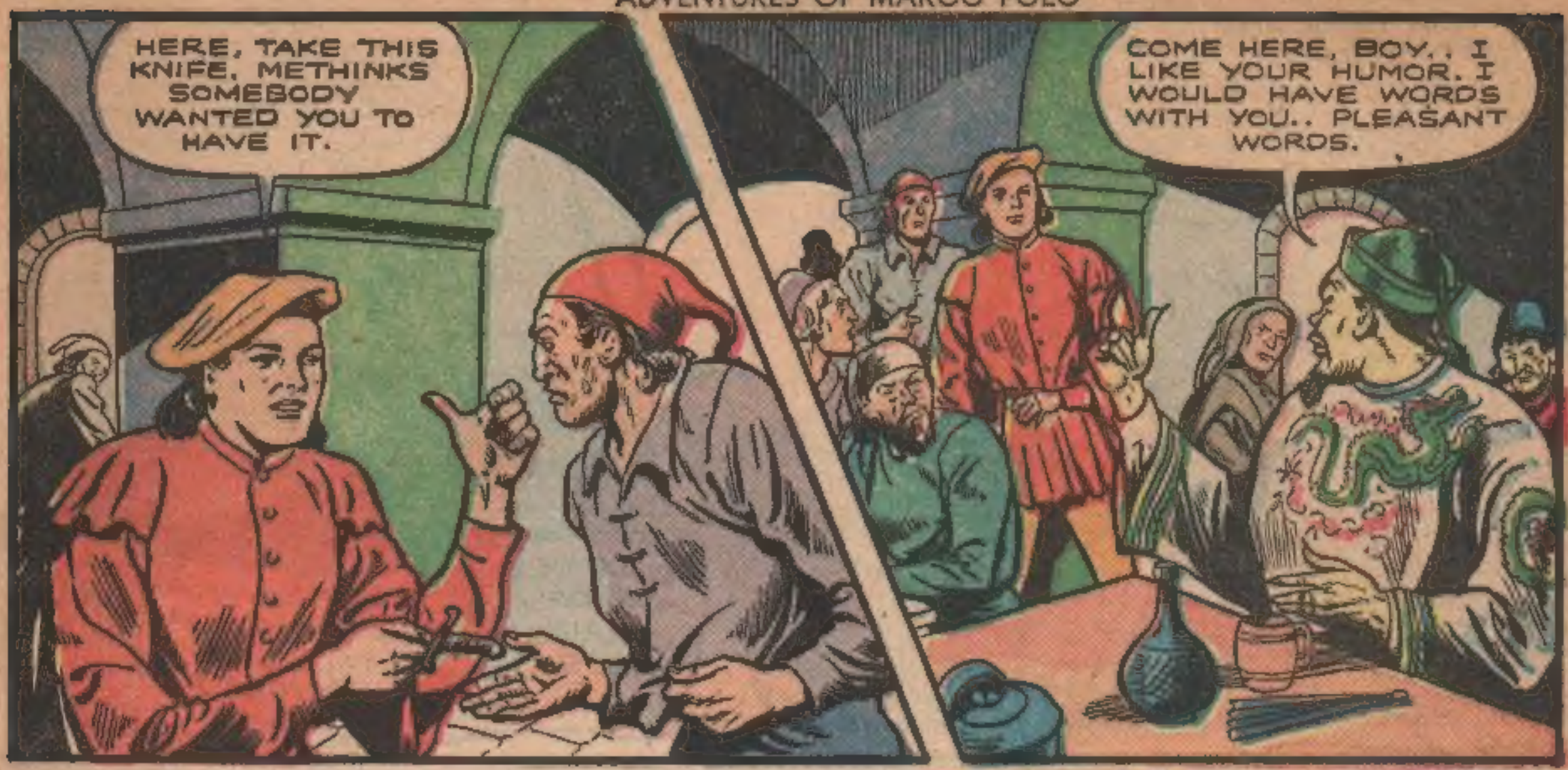
The Adventures of Marco Polo
Illustrated by HOMER FLEMING
EVER SINCE THE 13TH CENTURY, THE NAME MARCO POLO HAS CONJURED UP PICTURES OF THE MOST THRILLING ADVENTURES; THE MOST EXOTIC SCENES. AROUND THE TRAVELS OF THIS MAN HAVE BEEN WOVEN COUNTLESS STORIES; FANTASIES SURPASSING THE WILDEST TALES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN. YET THROUGH THIS SMOKESCREEN, THE MAIN STORY OF MARCO POLO STANDS OUT AS CLEAR AS EVER.
THE FOLLOWING BOOK HAS BEEN BASED UPON CERTAIN RECORDS OF MARCO POLO'S OWN STORY. GAPS IN NARRATION HAVE BEEN FILLED IN TO MAKE THIS A DRAMATIC PRESENTATION OF THE TRAVELS OF THE WORLD'S MOST TALKED OF EXPLORER...
MARCO POLO

INTO YON CELL, MAD VARLET.. AND NO MORE OF THY FANTASTIC TALES!


HAW, HAW, HAW! 'TIS INDEED A WILD TALE HE'D HAVE US BE-LIEVE!


THE FOOLS! LET THEM LAUGH!! THEIR STUPID RIDICULE SHALL NEVER BREAK MY SPIRIT. WITH THIS PEN I WILL PUT MY STORY ON PAPER SO THE WORLD CAN KNOW THE WONDERS I HAVE SEEN.
"It all began many years ago when I was a lad of eighteen. I lived in Venice then. One day while searching for my father, who was soon to leave for his second voyage to the Orient, I wandered into a rough cafe on the waterfront... when..."



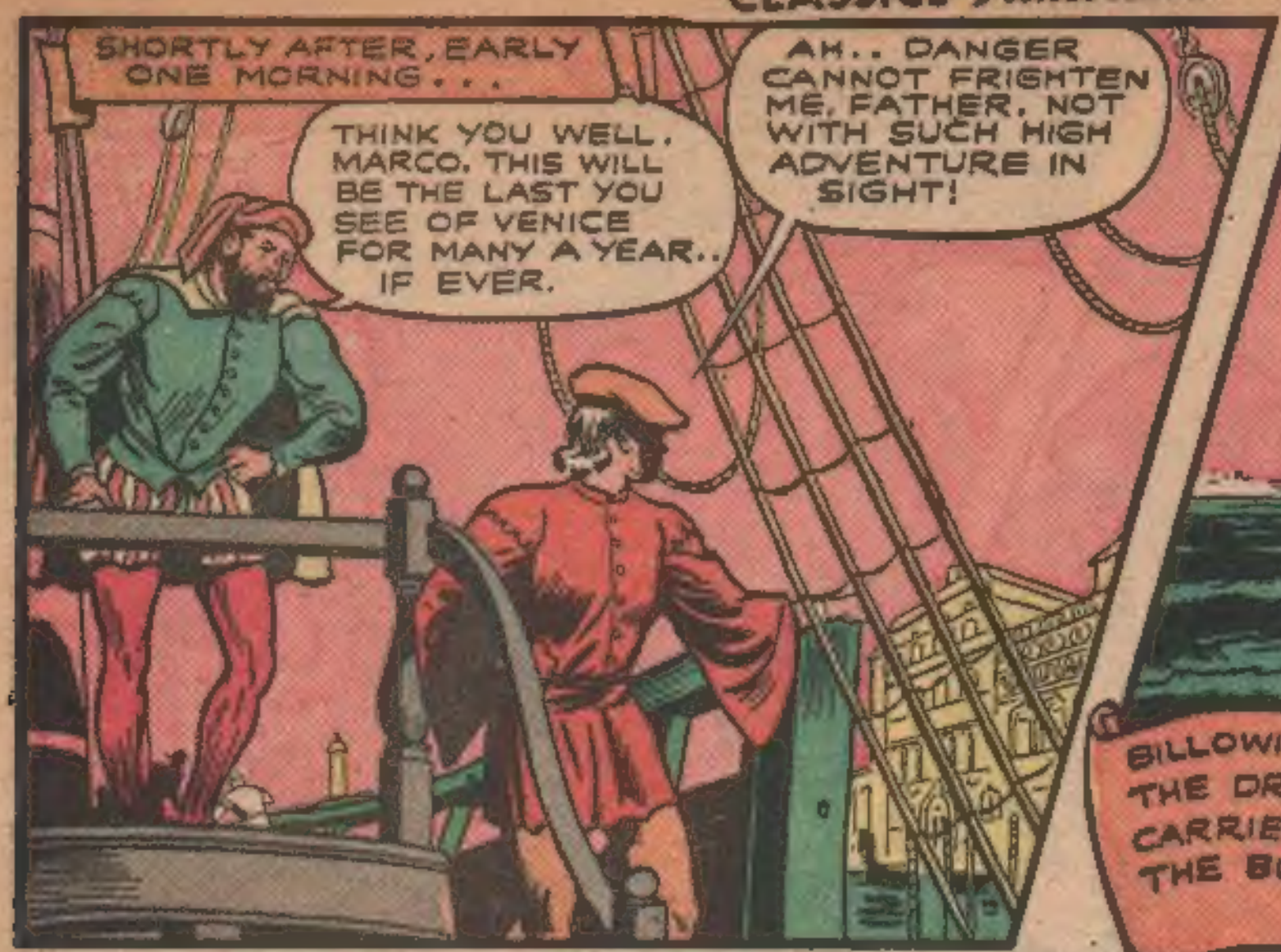

HERE, TAKE THIS KNIFE, METHINKS SOMEBODY WANTED YOU TO HAVE IT.
COME HERE, BOY.. I LIKE YOUR HUMOR. I WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH YOU.. PLEASANT WORDS.

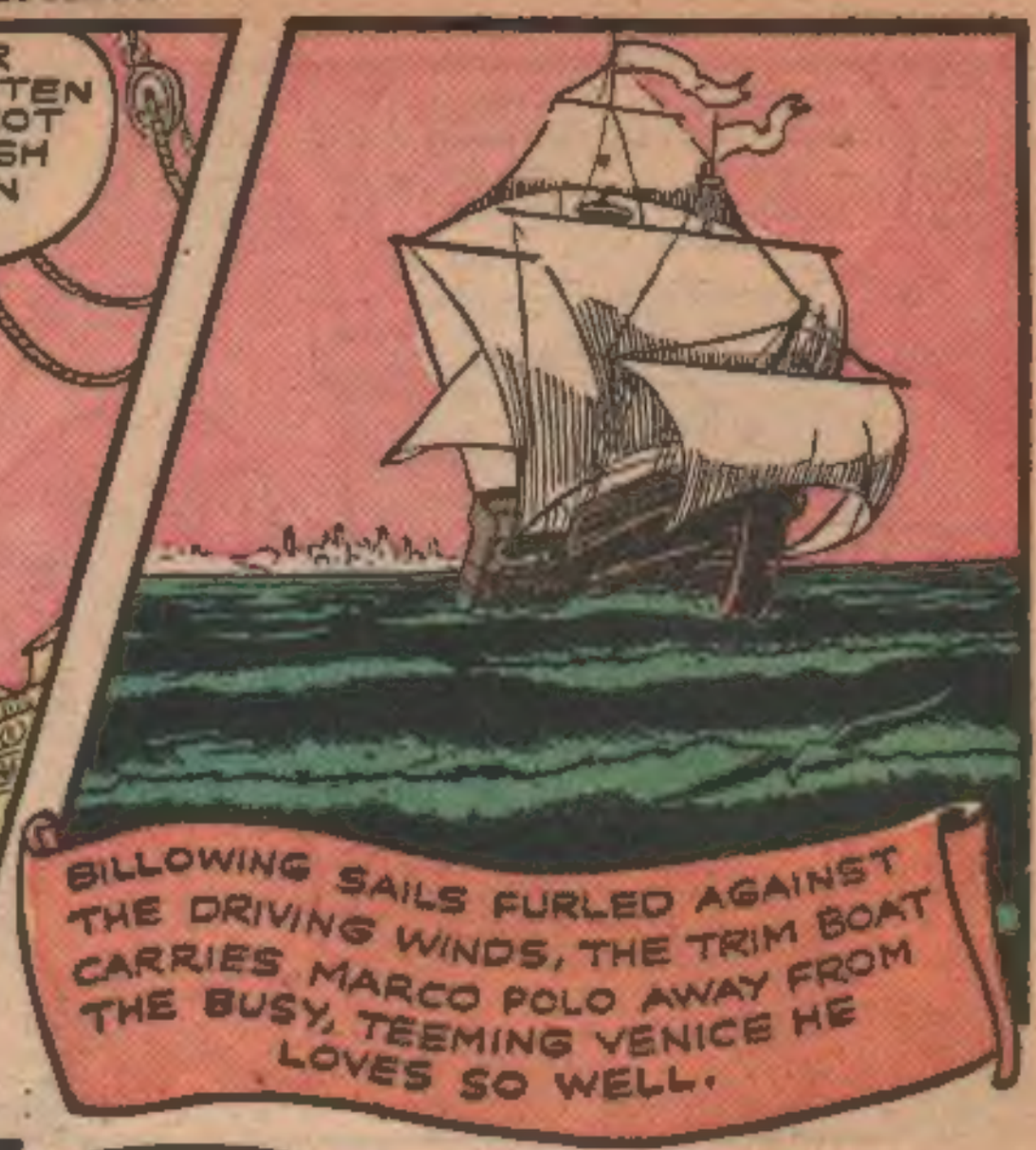
MY NAME IS LEE TSIEN, BOY. I AM A SEA-FARING MERCHANT AND I HAVE COME A LONG WAY TO YOUR BUSY CITY.
I AM HONORED TO KNOW YOU, SIR; MY NAME IS MARCO POLO..

WHY, YES, MARCO.. I KNOW OF YOUR FAMOUS FATHER. AND WHEN HE TRAVELS TO CHINA AGAIN, YOU MUST LEAVE WITH HIM..
.. MY FATHER HAS VISITED YOUR LAND.

..THERE YOU WILL FIND ADVENTURE AND BEAUTY. AND THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS, SILVER BELLS, WITH A VOICE LIKE HER NAME...

SHE IS LOVELY. TO SEE HER WOULD ALONE BE WORTH THE JOURNEY. MY FATHER MUST LET ME GO WITH HIM!!
HERE IS HER PICTURE.


SHORTLY AFTER, EARLY ONE MORNING...
THINK YOU WELL, MARCO. THIS WILL BE THE LAST YOU SEE OF VENICE FOR MANY A YEAR.. IF EVER.
AH.. DANGER CANNOT FRIGHTEN ME, FATHER. NOT WITH SUCH HIGH ADVENTURE IN SIGHT!

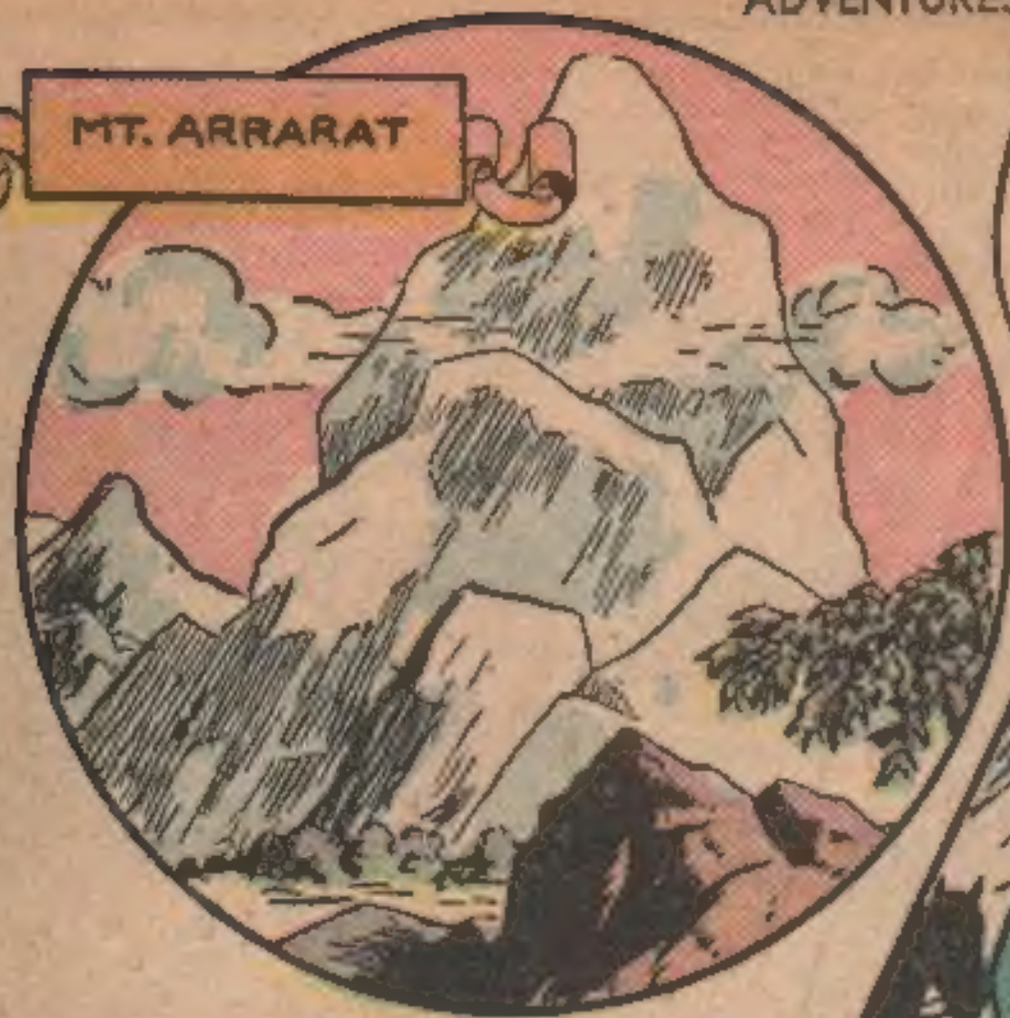

BILLOWING SAILS FURLED AGAINST THE DRIVING WINDS, THE TRIM BOAT CARRIES MARCO POLO AWAY FROM THE BUSY, TEEMING VENICE HE LOVES SO WELL.

AT LAST, THE FIRST STOP.. LAIASSUS...

SO THIS IS LAIASSUS. I HAVE HEARD MUCH OF THIS BUSY PORT.
YES, MY SON. WE HAVE TRAVELED LONG OVER SEA, BUT OUR JOURNEY OVER LAND WILL BE STILL LONGER.

YOUR ROUTE WILL TAKE YOU OVER HIGH MOUNTAINS, SIGNOR.. SOME TRIBES WILL BE FRIENDLY, SOME TREACHEROUS.. BUT IN ARMENIA YOU WILL FIND FRIENDSHIP.
YES, I KNOW. I HAVE BEEN THERE BEFORE.

MANY DAYS LATER, TIRED, WEARY, THEY ARRIVE AT THE FOOT OF MT. ARRARAT...
THERE, MY SON IS MT. ARRARAT. IT WAS ON THE PEAK OF THIS MOUNTAIN THAT NOAH BROUGHT HIS ARK TO REST AFTER THE GREAT FLOOD.

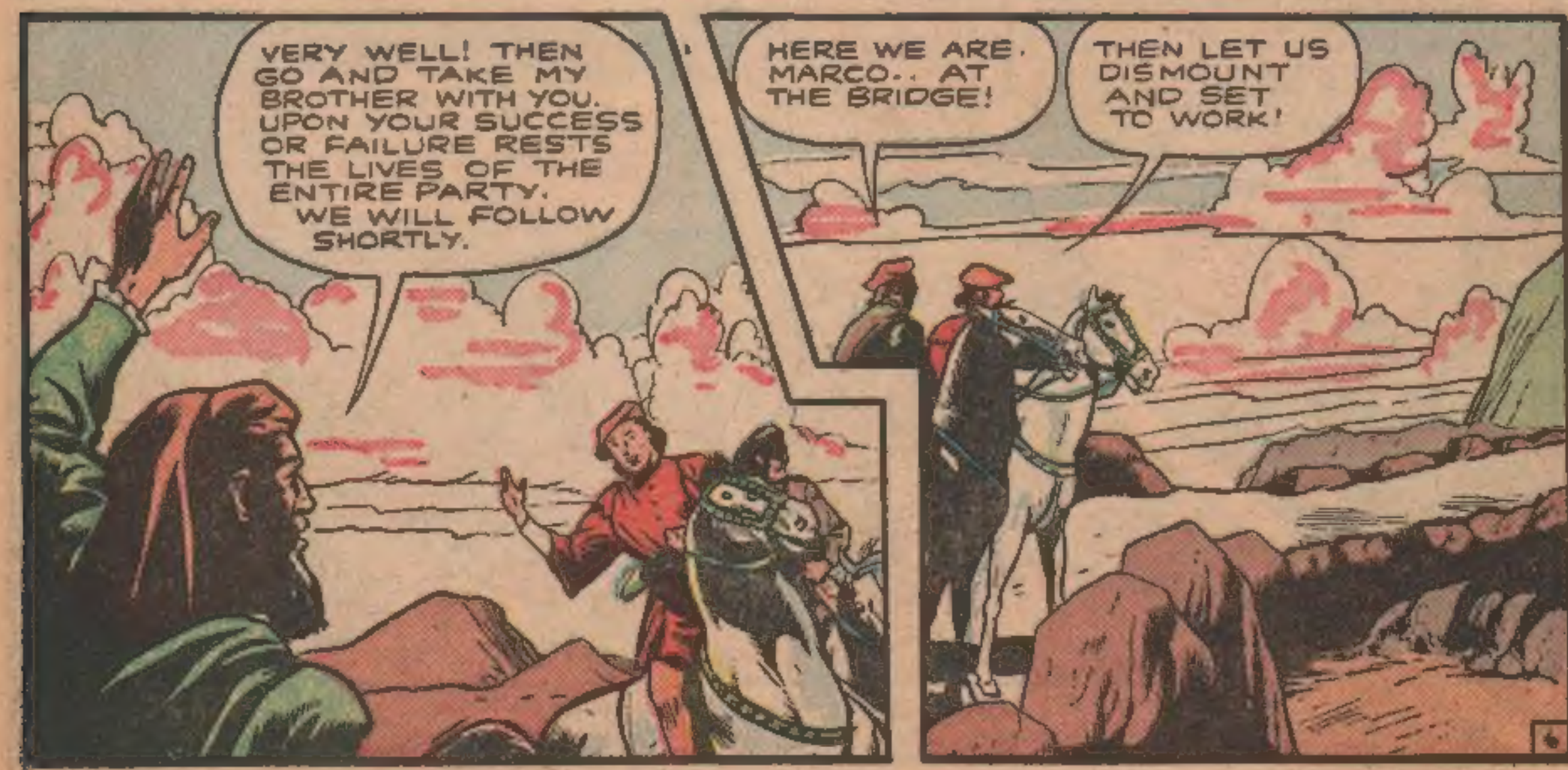

MT. ARRARAT

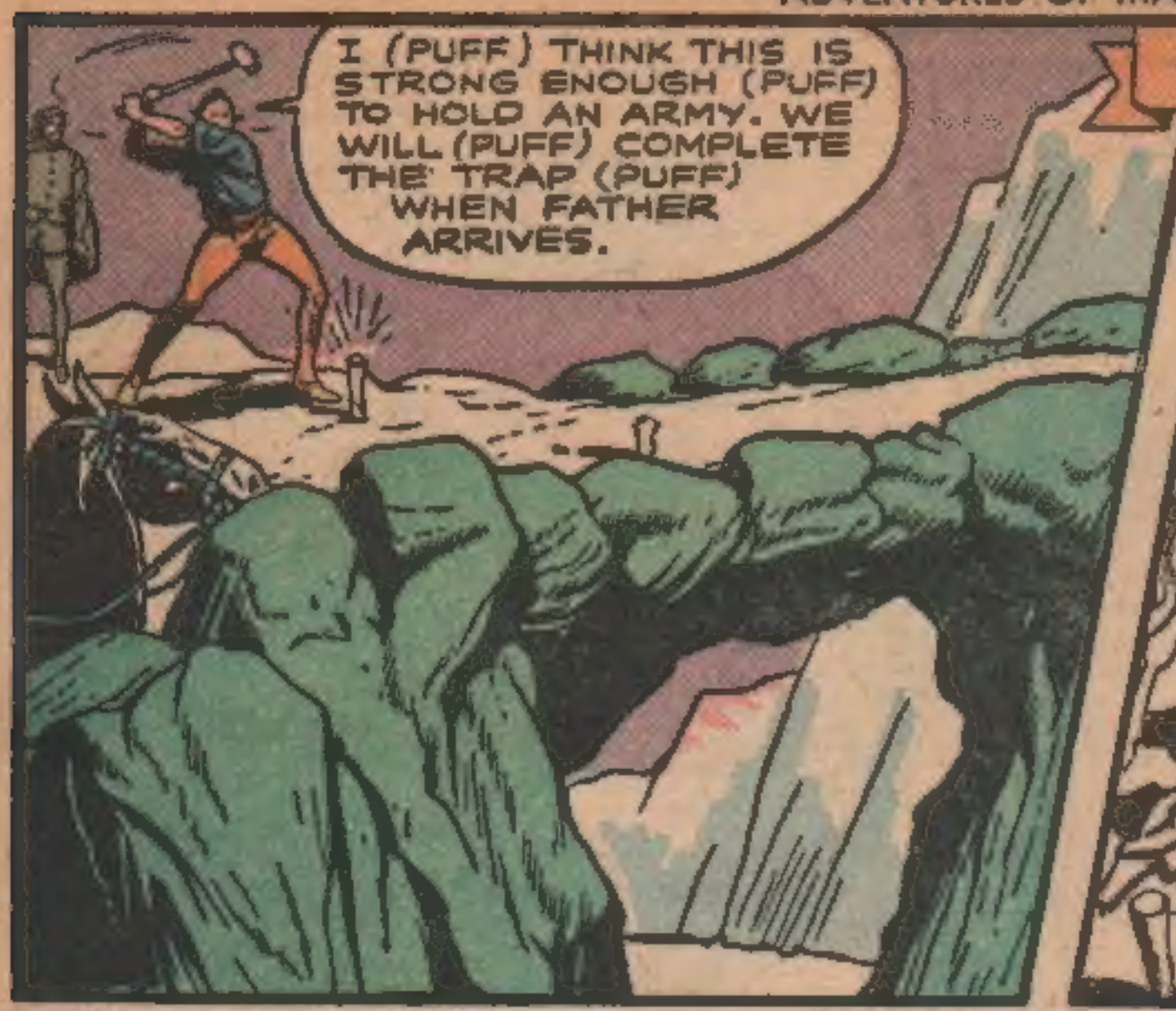
WE NOW COME TO GEORGIA, MARCO. IT WAS HERE THAT ALEXANDER THE GREAT ONCE TRIED TO BATTLE THE TARTARS. BUT THEY HELD ONE PASS...

"..ALEXANDER SENT HIS TROOPS THROUGH THE PASS.. BUT..."
"..SO A SMALL GROUP OF TARTARS FOUGHT ALL OF ALEXANDER'S ARMY!"
THEY DIE VERY QUICKLY, THESE MEN OF ALEXANDER!
WHY NOT! OUR ARROWS CATCH THEM AS THEY LEAVE THE PASS. THIS IS A FINE, COMFORTABLE WAR!
"..THE NARROW PASS LET ONLY A FEW SOLDIERS THROUGH AT A TIME..."
"..ALEXANDER THEN ORDERED A GREAT WALL WITH FORTIFIED TOWERS TO BE BUILT AT THE MOUTH OF THE PASS.. SEALING THE TARTARS IN THEIR OWN LAND."
WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL.. THEY CAN NEVER COME IN.
YES.. BUT WE CAN NEVER GO OUT!
"... BUT ENOUGH OF STORIES. WE HEAD FOR THE DANGEROUS LAND OF THE KURDS!"

TO THE SOUTH OF MARCO POLO AND HIS PARTY, A FIERCE GROUP GATHERS.. THE BANDIT KURDS!!
WORD HAS COME FROM ONE OF OUR SCOUTS THAT A CARAVAN OF TRAVELERS HEADS THIS WAY..
WE WILL MAKE EASY FEAST OF THEM.. SLIT THEIR THROATS AND STEAL THEIR TREASURE. TOMORROW MORNING WE RIDE.. TO TRAP THEM AT THE GREAT STONE BRIDGE.

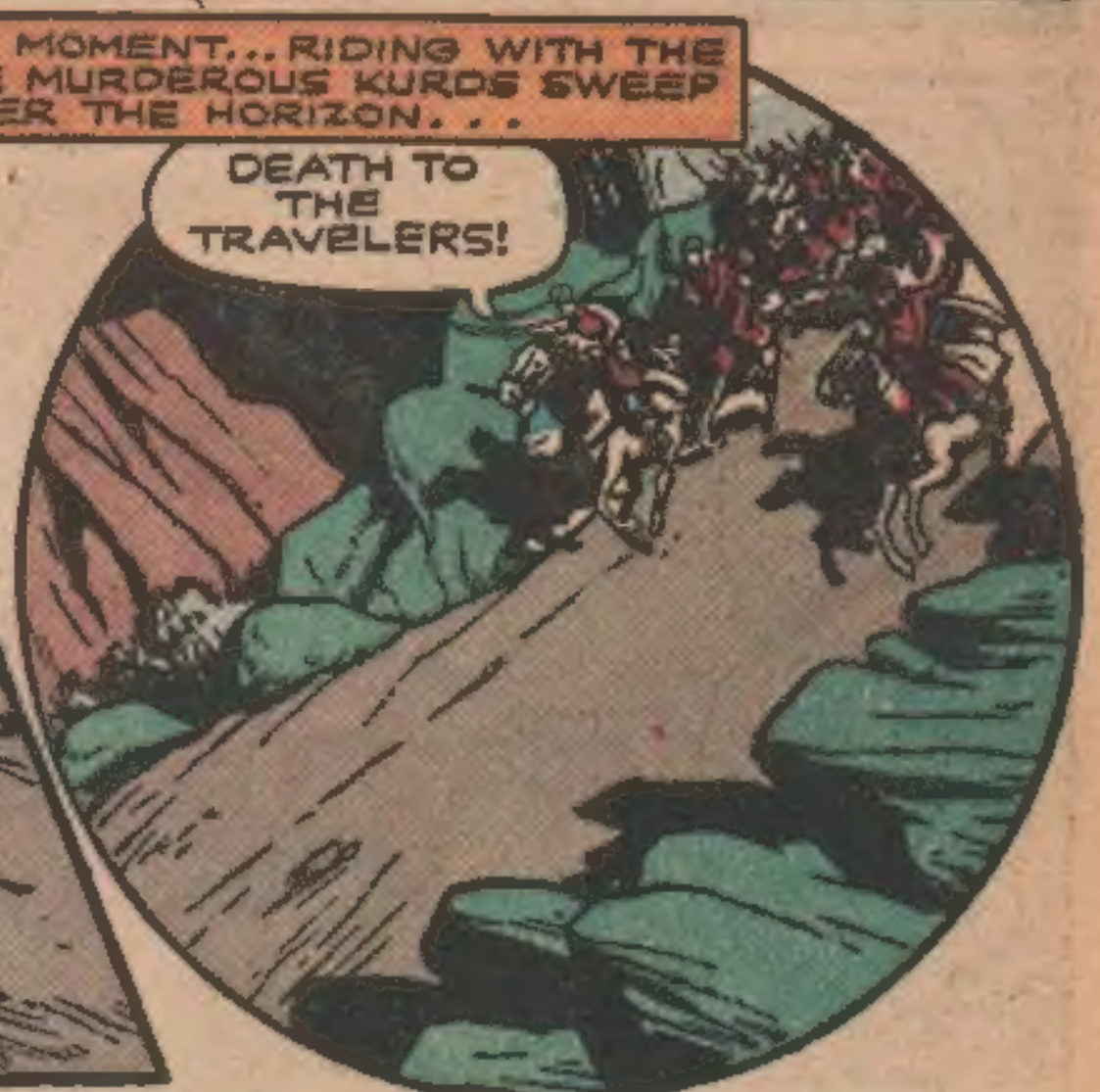
MEANWHILE...
WE WILL REST HERE TONIGHT.. FOR ON THE MORROW WE ENTER THE LAND OF THE MURDERING KURDS.
FATHER, I HAVE AN IDEA!
YOU HAVE TOLD ME THAT THE KURDS ALWAYS ATTACK AT THE BRIDGE. I BELIEVE IF WE TRAVEL TONIGHT, UNCLE AND I, WE CAN PREPARE A TRAP FOR THEM BEFORE THE SUN RISES FULL.


VERY WELL! THEN GO AND TAKE MY BROTHER WITH YOU. UPON YOUR SUCCESS OR FAILURE RESTS THE LIVES OF THE ENTIRE PARTY. WE WILL FOLLOW SHORTLY.
HERE WE ARE, MARCO.. AT THE BRIDGE!
THEN LET US DISMOUNT AND SET TO WORK!

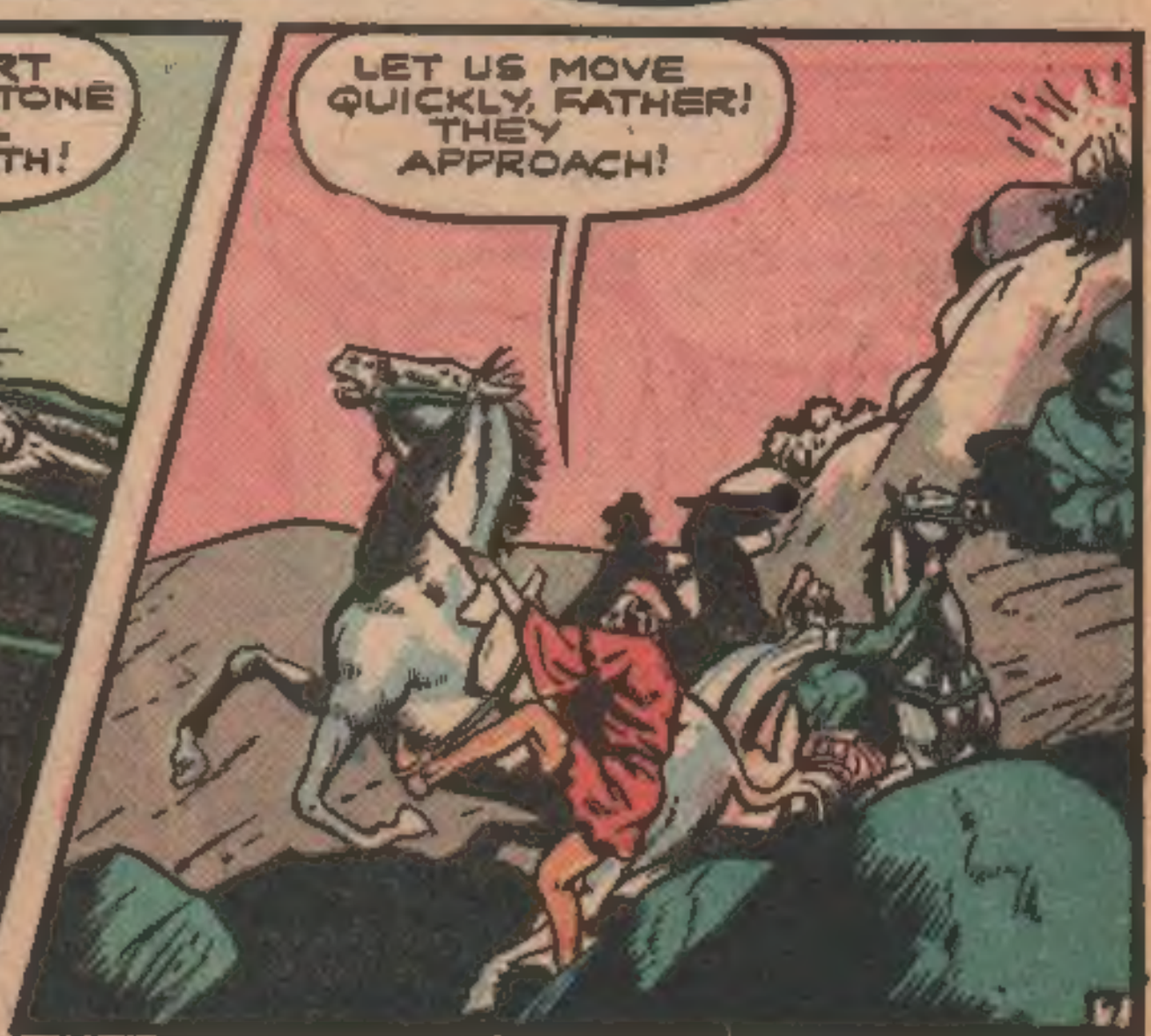

I (PUFF) THINK THIS IS STRONG ENOUGH (PUFF) TO HOLD AN ARMY. WE WILL (PUFF) COMPLETE THE TRAP (PUFF) WHEN FATHER ARRIVES.

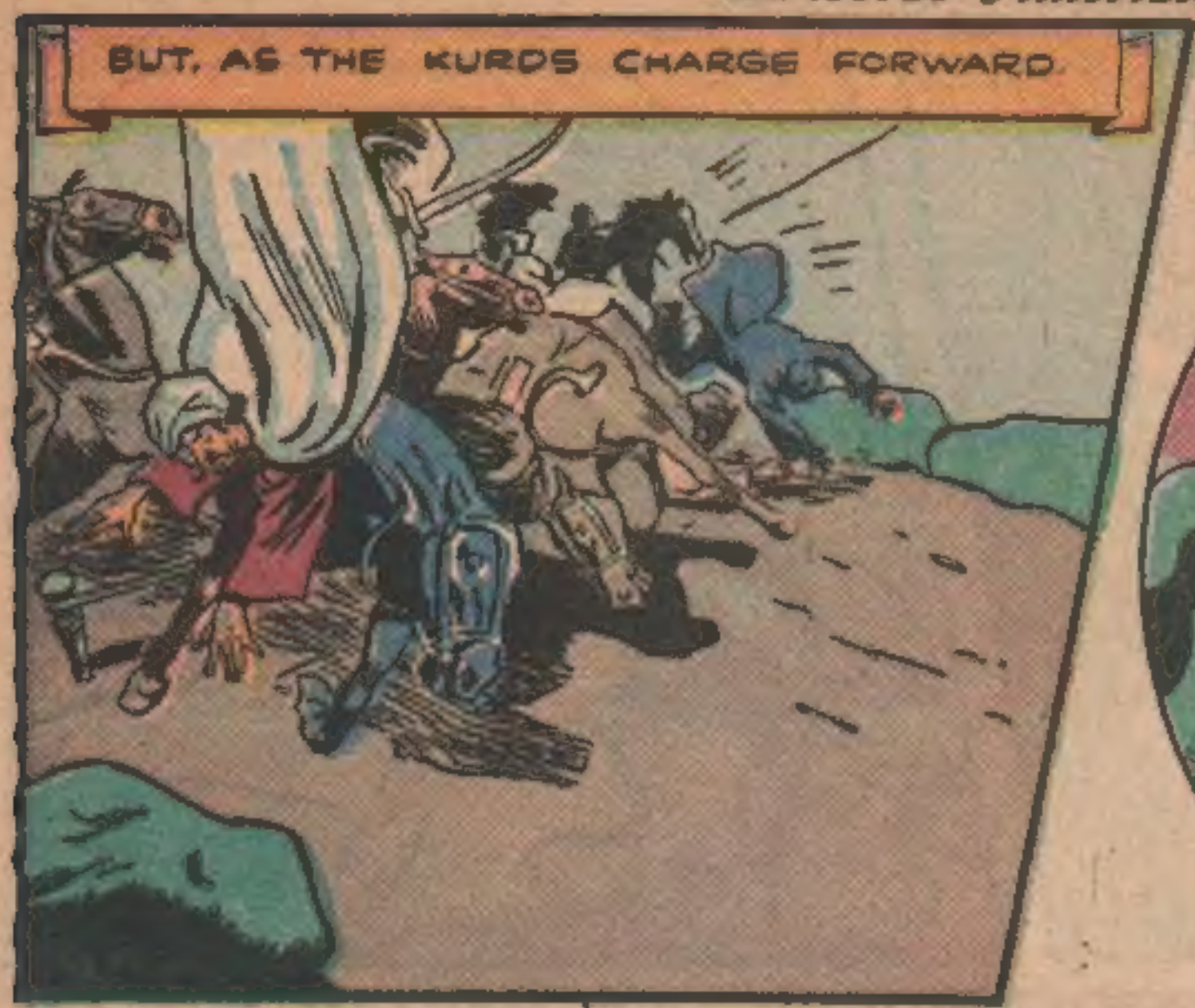
JUST BEFORE DAWN...
HURRY, MARCO.. DAWN BREAKS SOON!
I AM ALMOST FINISHED.

THIS LEATHER ROPE IS LIGHT IN COLOR, BUT HEAVY IN STRENGTH. IT WILL NOT BE SEEN.. BUT IT WILL BE FELT!

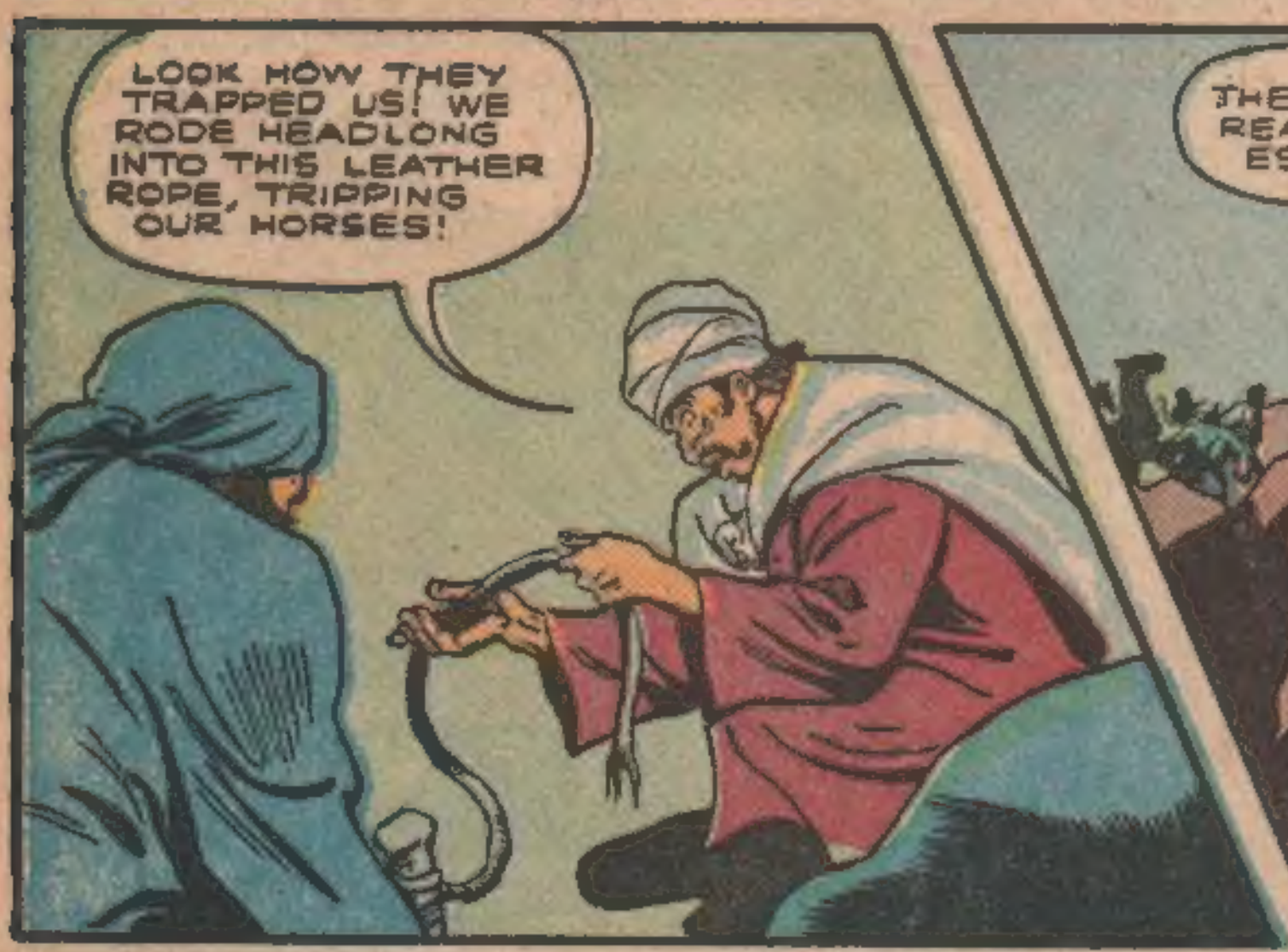

AT THAT MOMENT... RIDING WITH THE SUN, THE MURDEROUS KURDS SWEEP OVER THE HORIZON...
DEATH TO THE TRAVELERS!

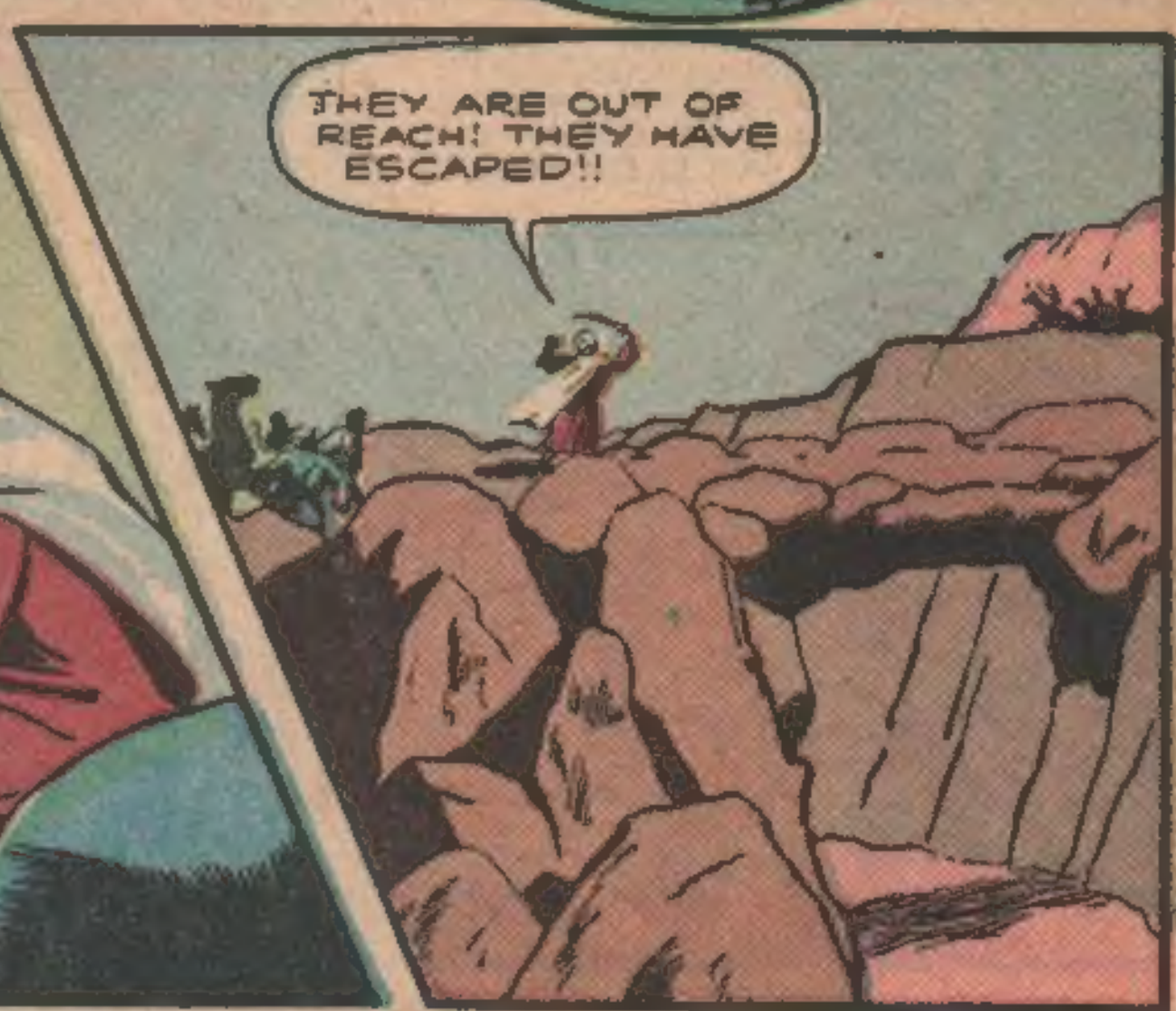
WE WILL LET THEM START ACROSS THE NARROW STONE BRIDGE. THERE WE WILL STAMPEDE THEM TO DEATH!


LET US MOVE QUICKLY, FATHER! THEY APPROACH!


BUT, AS THE KURDS CHARGE FORWARD.

AIEE!
HELP!
LOOK OUT!


LOOK HOW THEY TRAPPED US! WE RODE HEADLONG INTO THIS LEATHER ROPE, TRIPPING OUR HORSES!


THEY ARE OUT OF REACH! THEY HAVE ESCAPED!!

ENRAGED, THE KURD CHIEFTAIN TAKES AFTER HIS OWN MEN!!
I SHALL NOT BE CHEATED! I'LL KILL EVERY ONE OF YOU! FOOLS!!

PLEASE. PLEASE. OH LEADER, SPARE MY POOR LIFE! IT MUST HAVE BEEN AN EVIL SPIRIT THAT WRONGED US!
IT IS AN EVIL SPIRIT THAT NOW SAVES YOUR WORTHLESS LIFE I NEED YOU FOR BANDITRY NOT FOR REVENGE

DAYS LATER, THE POLOS EMERGE FROM THE DANGEROUS MOUNTAINS...

THE TIGRIS RIVER! THAT MEANS WE ARE NEARING BAGHDAD..RICHEST CITY IN THE NEAR EAST. WE WILL STOP THERE.

GOOD, WE NEED REST SORELY.

BAGHDAD

HERE THE FINEST PEARLS OF INDIA ARE BROUGHT TO HAVE HOLES BORED IN THEM. IT IS DELICATE WORK.

THE BANDIT KURDS MUST REAP A RICH HARVEST FROM CARAVANS THAT CARRY THESE PRECIOUS PEARLS TO EUROPE

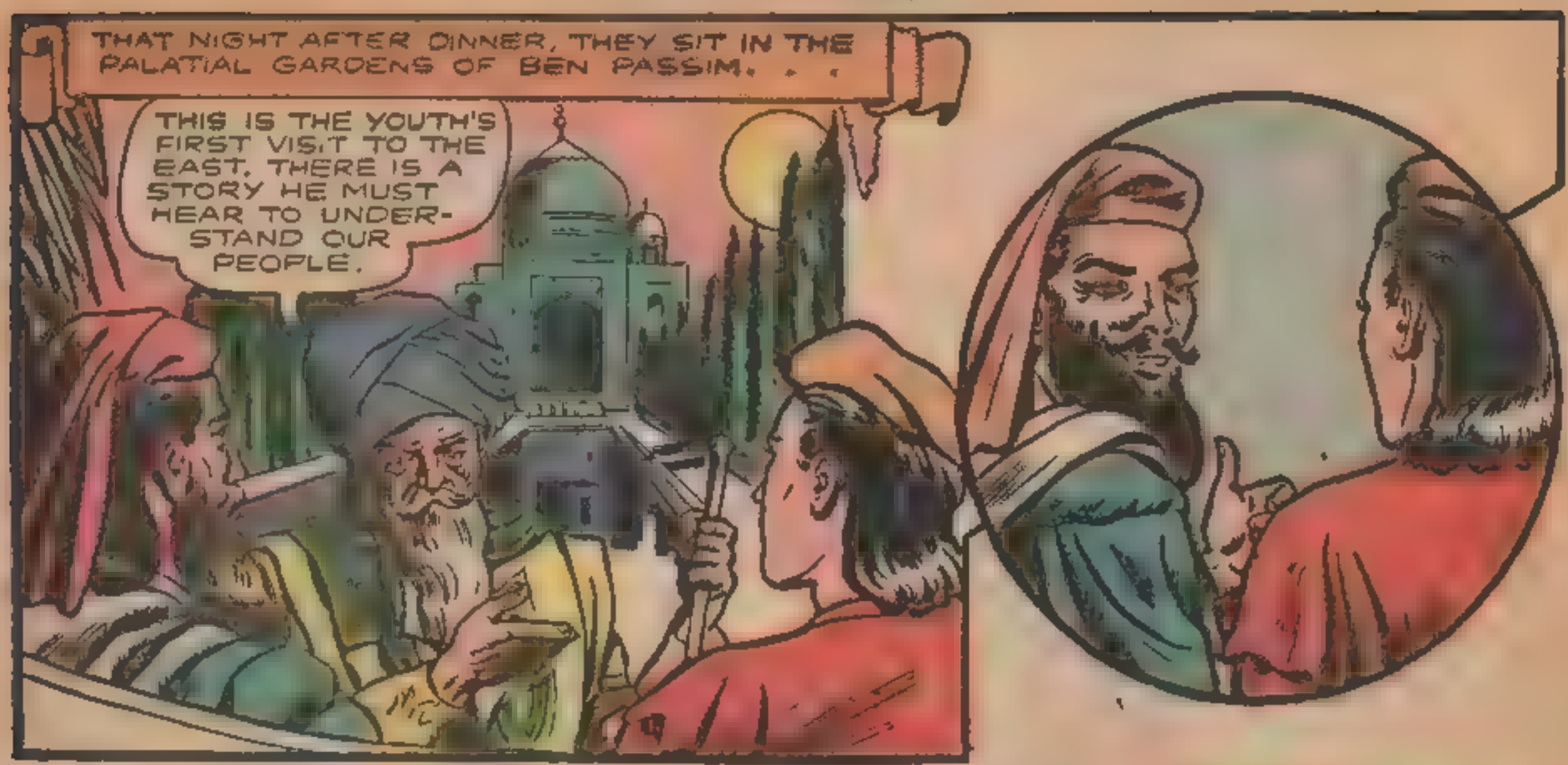
WE STAY WITH MY FRIEND, ALI BEN PASSIM. BUT, MARCO, ONE WARNING.. THE OLD MAN HAS MANY TALES TO TELL.

WORRY NOT, FATHER, I SHALL LISTEN..AND NOT LOOK ILL AT EASE. WHAT A SPLENDID HOUSE!

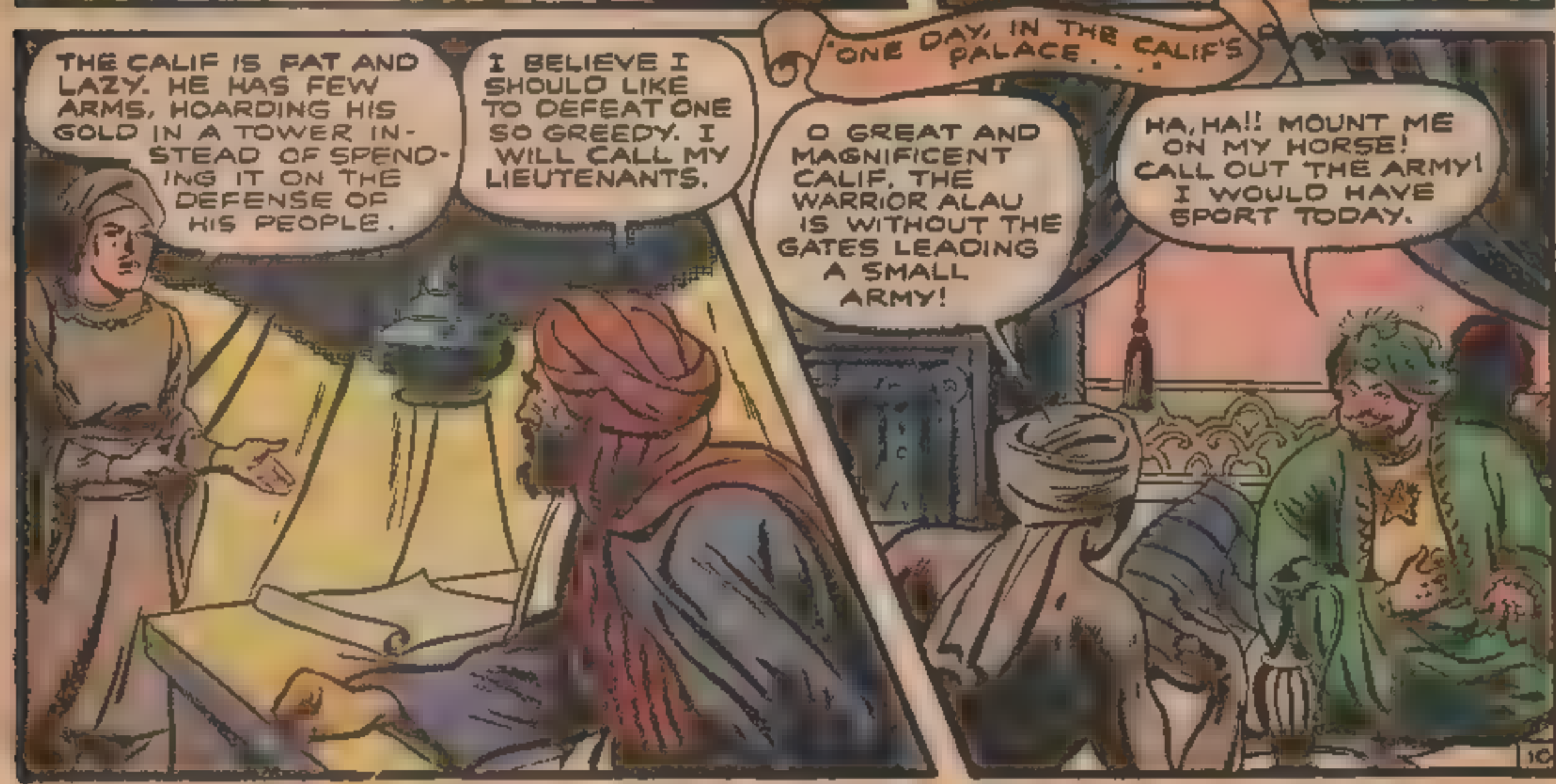
AS THEY STEP INSIDE...

GREETINGS, WORTHY FRIEND. IT HAS BEEN MANY YEARS SINCE LAST WE WERE TOGETHER

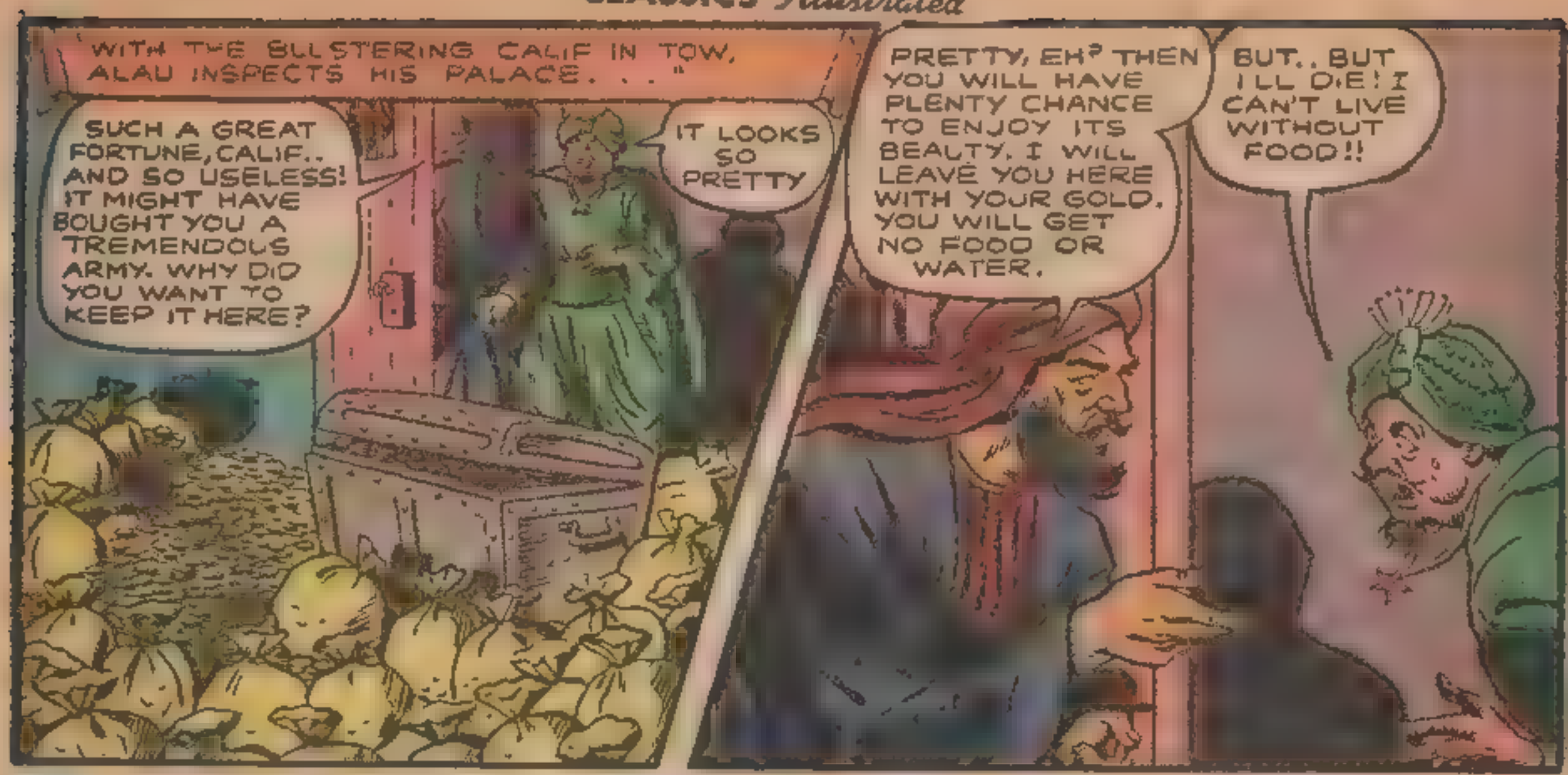
GREETINGS, BEN PASSIM. YOU KNOW MY BROTHER MAFFEO AND THIS IS MY SON, MARCO.

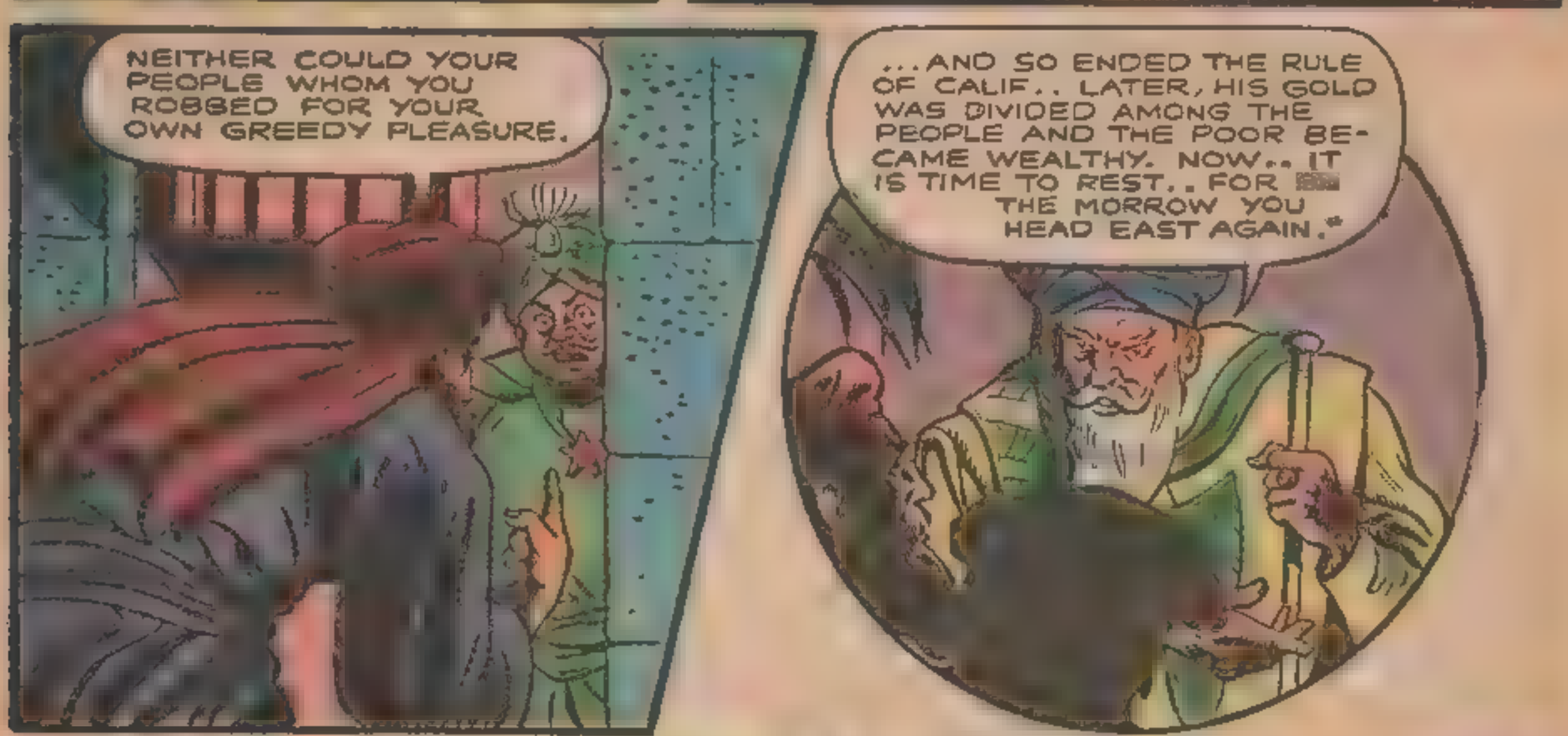

THAT NIGHT AFTER DINNER, THEY SIT IN THE PALATIAL GARDENS OF BEN PASSIM. . .
THIS IS THE YOUTH'S FIRST VISIT TO THE EAST. THERE IS A STORY HE MUST HEAR TO UNDERSTAND OUR PEOPLE.

WHEN I WAS A YOUTH, THERE WAS GREAT SUFFERING IN OUR RICH LAND. FOR WE WERE RULED BY A WICKED CALIF WHO THOUGHT ONLY TO AMASS GREAT WEALTH.. WHILE THE PEOPLE STARVED.
WE HEARD OF THE WARRIOR ALAU.. WHO, THOUGH FIERCE AND BRUTAL WITH HIS CAPTIVES, BELIEVED IN JUSTICE FOR THE POOR. I WAS CHOSEN TO GO TO HIM.


ONE DAY, IN THE CALIF'S PALACE. . .
THE CALIF IS FAT AND LAZY. HE HAS FEW ARMS, HOARDING HIS GOLD IN A TOWER INSTEAD OF SPENDING IT ON THE DEFENSE OF HIS PEOPLE.
I BELIEVE I SHOULD LIKE TO DEFEAT ONE SO GREEDY. I WILL CALL MY LIEUTENANTS.
O GREAT AND MAGNIFICENT CALIF, THE WARRIOR ALAU IS WITHOUT THE GATES LEADING A SMALL ARMY!
HA, HA!! MOUNT ME ON MY HORSE! CALL OUT THE ARMY! I WOULD HAVE SPORT TODAY.

"AS THE CALIF AND HIS MEN ADVANCE. . ."
SEE, THEY RETREAT ALREADY.. WE'LL FOLLOW THEM.. 'TIS LIKE HUNTING A TAME BOAR.
"...ALAU FALLS BACK, EVER RETREATING..."
"IN A NEARBY FOREST."
TO HORSES, MEN! IN A FEW MINUTES, ALAU WILL HAVE RETREATED TO HIS WOOD...
MASTER, I FEAR THE PASSING OF ANOTHER MOMENT.
MY HAND GIVES THE SIGNAL. AND DO NOT FEAR, MY FAITHFUL AIDE, THE TRAP WILL NOW CLOSE!
"AS THE CALIF'S ARMY IS ALMOST ON THE TROOPS OF THE WARRIOR, ALAU..
WE HAVE BEEN TRICKED! DEFEND ME, MEN. FROM TWO SIDES COME THE WARRIORS OF ALAU!
SURRENDER, CALIF! YOUR ARMY LIES SCATTERED ON THE GROUNDS
SCATTERED BY YOUR KNAVERY, OH ALAU YOU.. YOU SHALL PAY FOR THIS. MY FRIENDS SHALL AVENGE ME.

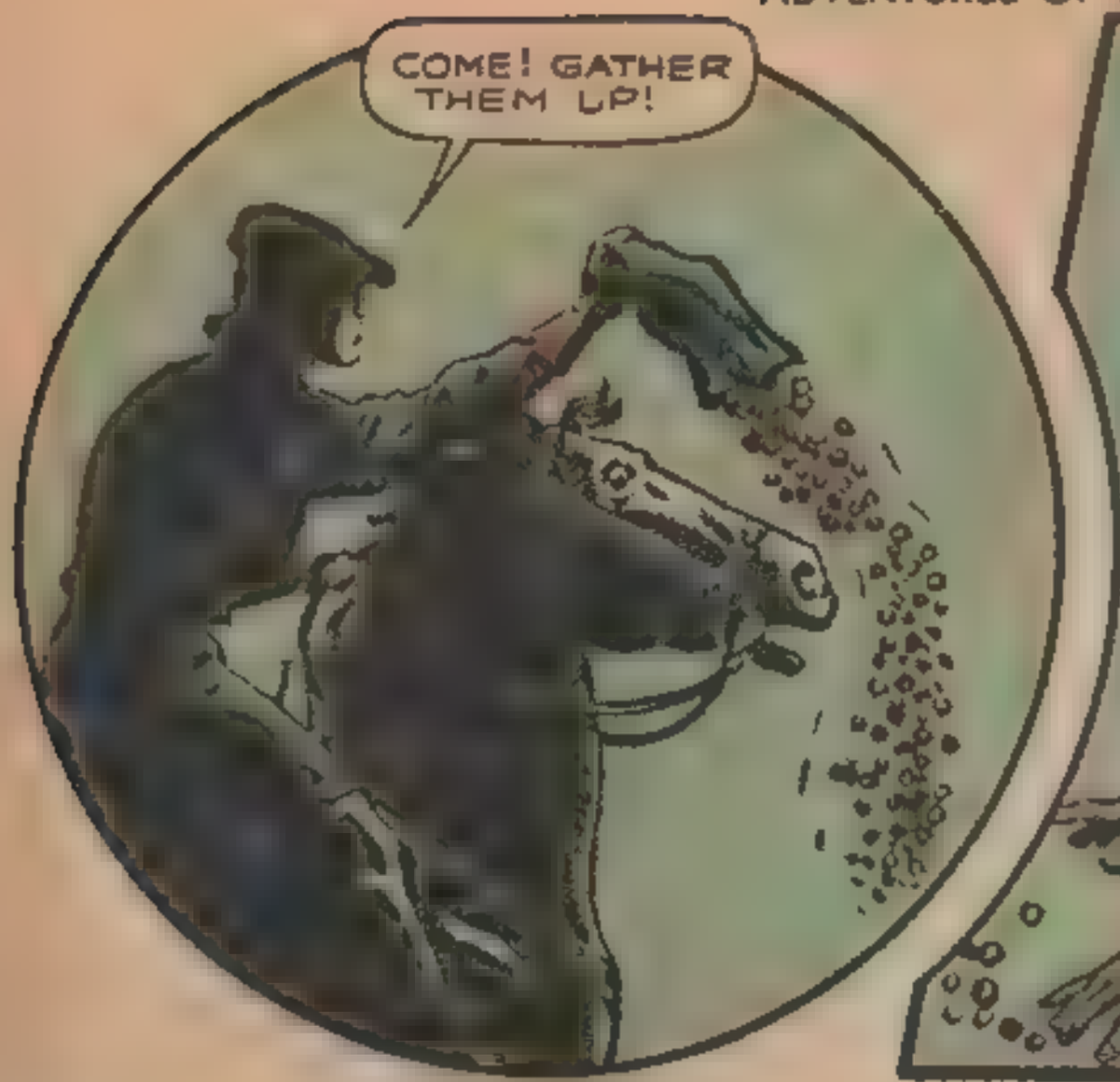

WITH THE BLUSTERING CALIF IN TOW, ALAU INSPECTS HIS PALACE. . ."
SUCH A GREAT FORTUNE, CALIF.. AND SO USELESS! IT MIGHT HAVE BOUGHT YOU A TREMENDOUS ARMY. WHY DID YOU WANT TO KEEP IT HERE?
IT LOOKS SO PRETTY
PRETTY, EH? THEN YOU WILL HAVE PLENTY CHANCE TO ENJOY ITS BEAUTY. I WILL LEAVE YOU HERE WITH YOUR GOLD. YOU WILL GET NO FOOD OR WATER.
BUT.. BUT I'LL DIE! I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT FOOD!!

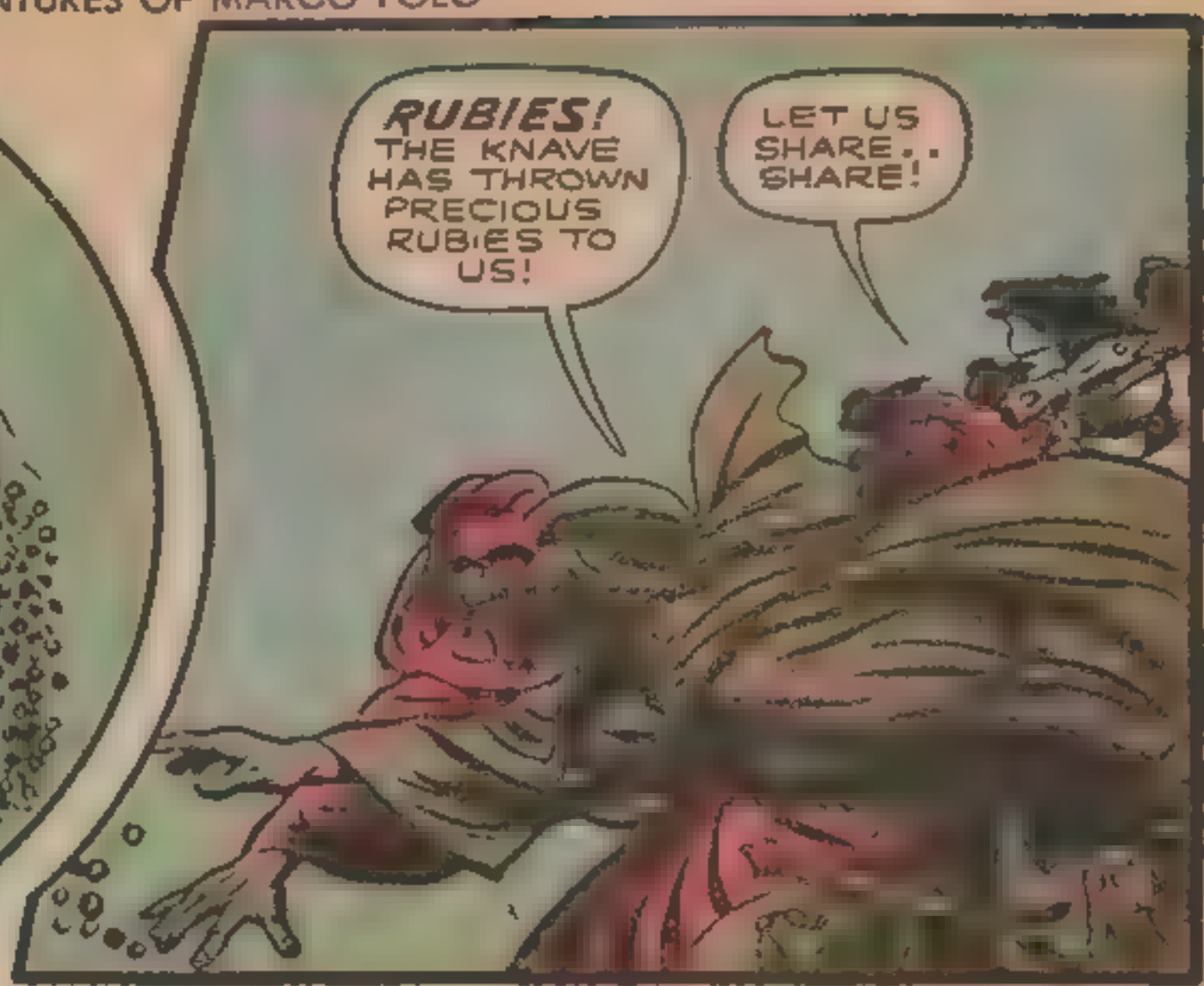

NEITHER COULD YOUR PEOPLE WHOM YOU ROBBED FOR YOUR OWN GREEDY PLEASURE.
...AND SO ENDED THE RULE OF CALIF.. LATER, HIS GOLD WAS DIVIDED AMONG THE PEOPLE AND THE POOR BECAME WEALTHY. NOW.. IT IS TIME TO REST.. FOR THE MORROW YOU HEAD EAST AGAIN."

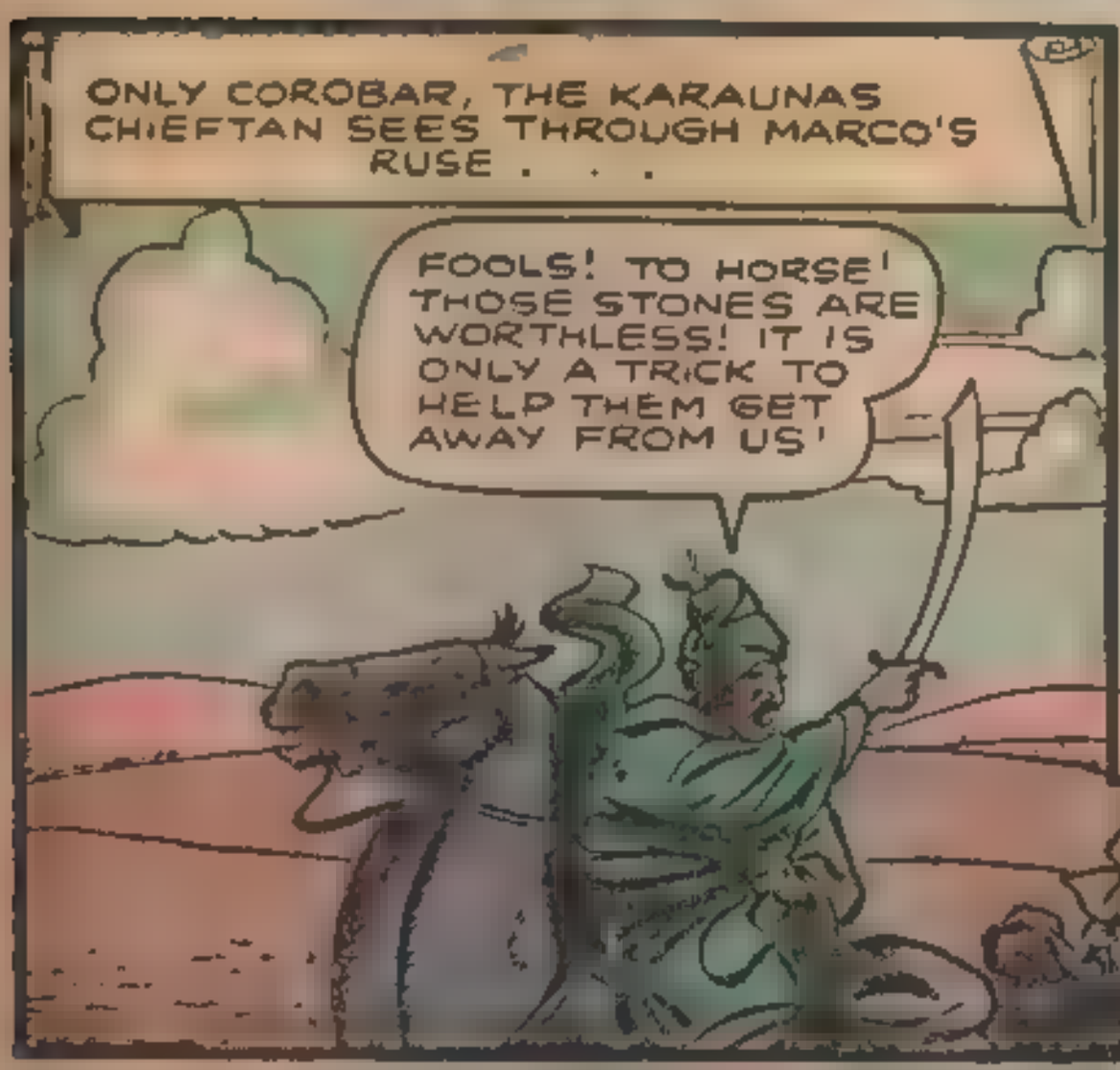
AS FATHER AND SON HEAD TOWARD THEIR SLEEPING QUARTERS. . .
DO YOU THINK THE OLD MAN'S STORY IS TRUE, MARCO?
I WILL BELIEVE IT UNTIL SOMEONE PROVES OTHERWISE, SIR.
MY SON, I AM GLAD YOU ANSWERED THUS. BEN PASSIM IS AN HONEST MAN. NO LIE HAS EVER PASSED HIS LIPS. BUT LET US TO BED MORNING COMES CLOSER

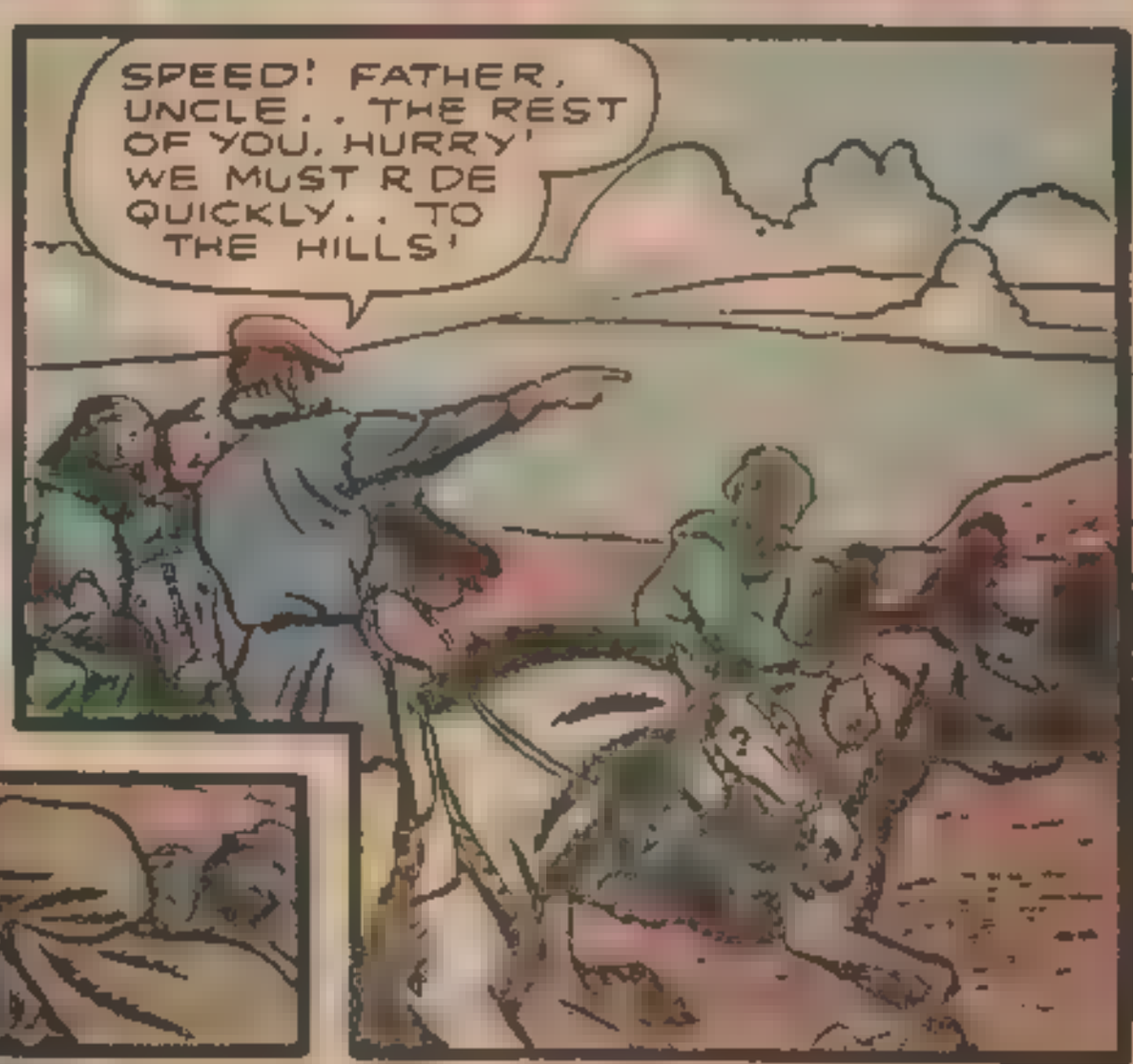
HEADING EVER EAST, MARCO APPROACHES REOBARLE PROVINCE IN INDIA WHERE EVEN NOW THE MERCHANTS GATHER. . .
FRIENDS, THE WINTER SEASON IS UPON US. WE MUST TAKE OUR BEASTS OF BURDEN TO THE FULL PASTURES IN THE COUNTRY. . THEY RICHLY DESERVE THE REST.
AND TO A SPY THAT LURKS IN THEIR MIDST, THESE WORDS ARE A CHOICE BIT OF NEWS. . .
THAT NIGHT A SLINKY FIGURE RIDES INTO THE DARKNESS...
THE TIME HAS COME. WITH THE MERCHANTS GATHERING, COROBAR WILL WANT TO PAY THE PEOPLE OF REOBARLE ANOTHER VISIT!
HA! THERE ARE BANDITS IN THIS COUNTRY JUST AS TREACHEROUS AS THE KURDS. THEY ARE CALLED KARAUNAS AND ARE LED BY THE VICIOUS KING COROBAR. THEY SWEEP UPON MERCHANT CARAVANS UNDER A CLOUD OF DARKNESS.. DARKNESS THAT FALLS AT THE HEIGHT OF DAY!
UNAWARE OF THE GATHERING FORCES OF EVIL, MARCO POLO AND HIS PARTY RIDE INTO REOBARLE IN THE MORNING SUN. . .
THIS IS THE SEASON WHEN THE TRADERS REST THEIR CARAVANS. IT IS A WONDERFUL SIGHT. WE ARE FORTUNATE TO SEE IT, MY SON.
I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER WHAT THE KURDS WOULD DO TO A GROUP AS WEALTHY AND UNDEFENDED!
LOOK AT THE WEALTH IN THAT TENT, FATHER.. TRULY A KING'S RANSOM!
SOMETIMES ALL OF THIS WEALTH IS THE RANSOM OF ONLY ONE MAN CAPTURED BY THE KARAUNAS!
THAT NIGHT, MARCO TOSSES IN A LIGHT FRETFUL SLEEP. . .
I AM TROUBLED.. I KNOW NOT WHY.. I FEEL A HOST OF DANGER APPROACHING.. I HOPE I AM WRONG...

THE NEXT NOON AS THE POLO PARTY DINE . .
SIRES! A GREAT DARKNESS APPROACHES!
DARKNESS! IMPOSSIBLE! IT'S HIGH NOON!
SEE, MY GOOD SIR . . THERE . . LOOK!
YOU ARE RIGHT! A MYSTERIOUS CLOUD OF BLACK!
AND UNDER THE COVER OF THAT OMINOUS CLOUD OF DARKNESS, RIDE THE RUTHLESS KARAUNAS
BACK AT THE MERCHANT ENCAMPMENT...
KARAUNAS! WE'LL BE KILLED!
KARAUNAS! THEY ARE UPON US!
PEACE, OH MERCHANTS! I HAVE AN IDEA! GATHER ALL THE SMALL RED STONES YOU CAN FIND AND BRING THEM TO ME IN A SACK!
THEY ARE ALMOST HERE! IF ONLY I CAN TRICK THEM!
WAIT! YOU MEN OF KARAUNAS, WAIT! I HAVE A GREAT PRIZE FOR YOU!


COME! GATHER THEM UP!


RUBIES! THE KNAVE HAS THROWN PRECIOUS RUBIES TO US!
LET US SHARE.. SHARE!


ONLY COROBAR, THE KARAUNAS CHIEFTAN SEES THROUGH MARCO'S RUSE . . .
FOOLS! TO HORSE! THOSE STONES ARE WORTHLESS! IT IS ONLY A TRICK TO HELP THEM GET AWAY FROM US!

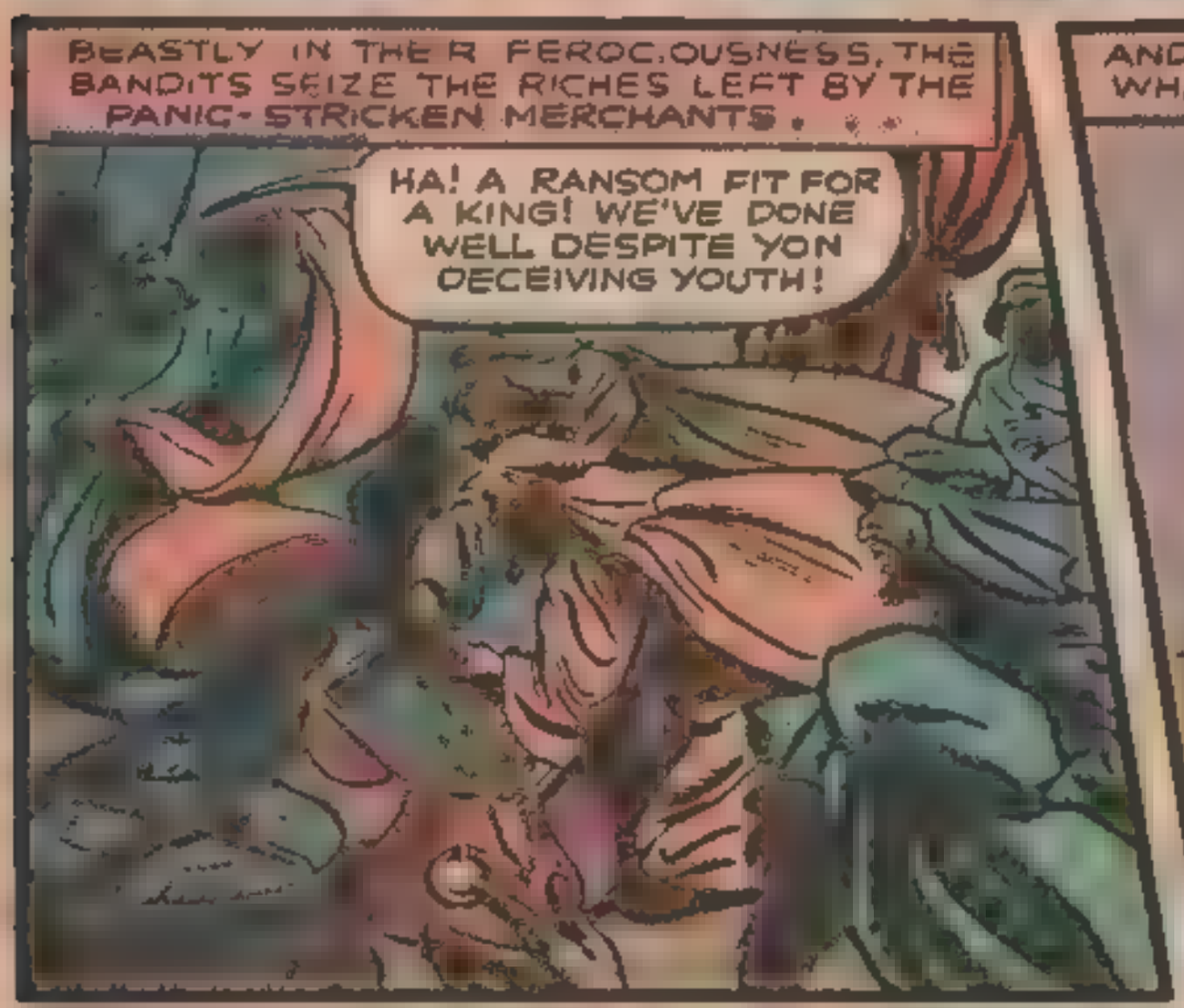

SPEED! FATHER, UNCLE.. THE REST OF YOU, HURRY! WE MUST RIDE QUICKLY.. TO THE HILLS!

KONSALMI CASTLE! IF WE CAN REACH IT WE ARE SAVED

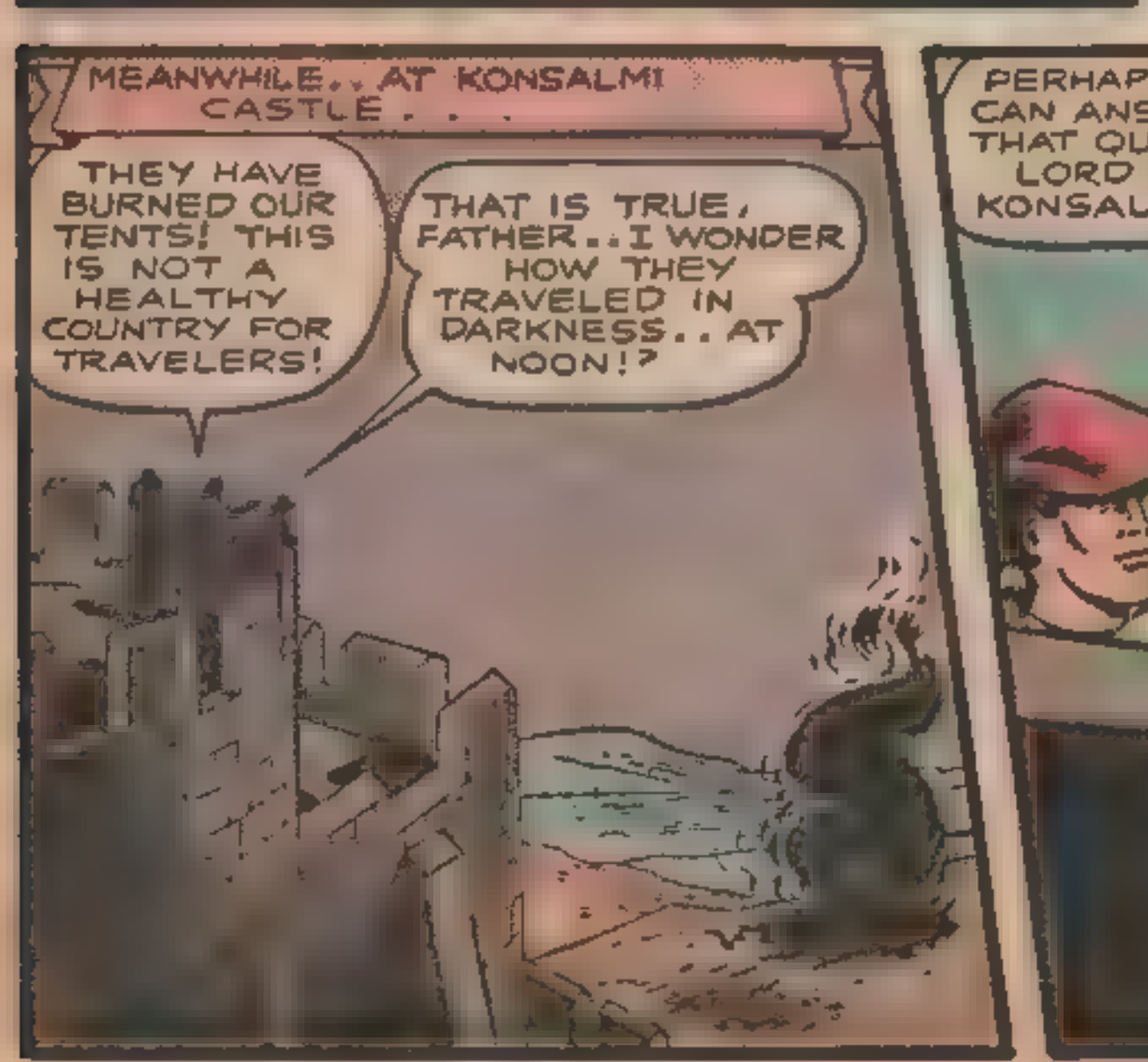
BREATHLESS PITCHED TO THROBBING EXCITEMENT BY THE RIDARING ESCAPE, THEY STORM THE KONSALMI GATES.
THEY ARE ALMOST UPON US! HURRY, IN. IN!

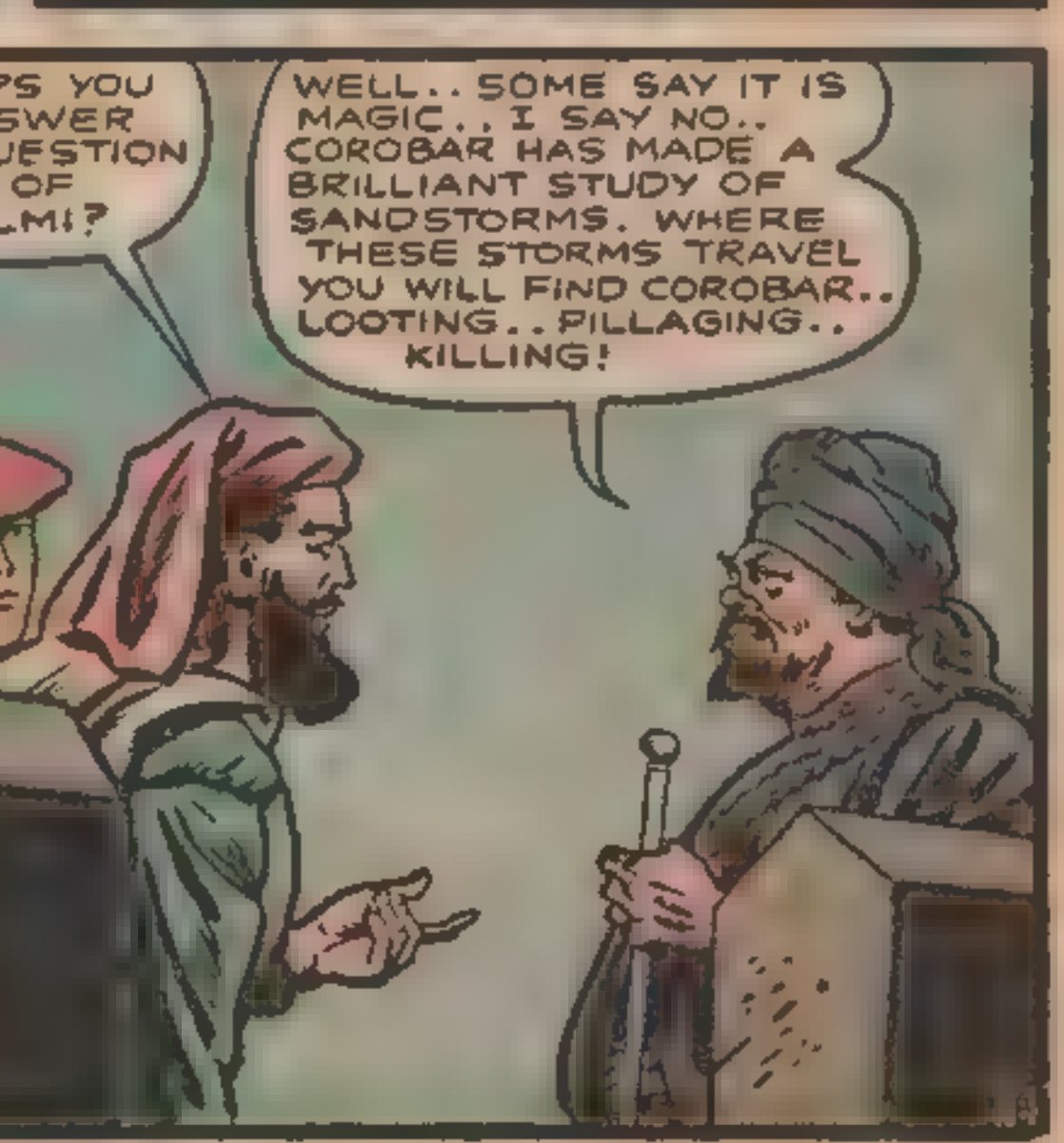
SAFE! AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON!

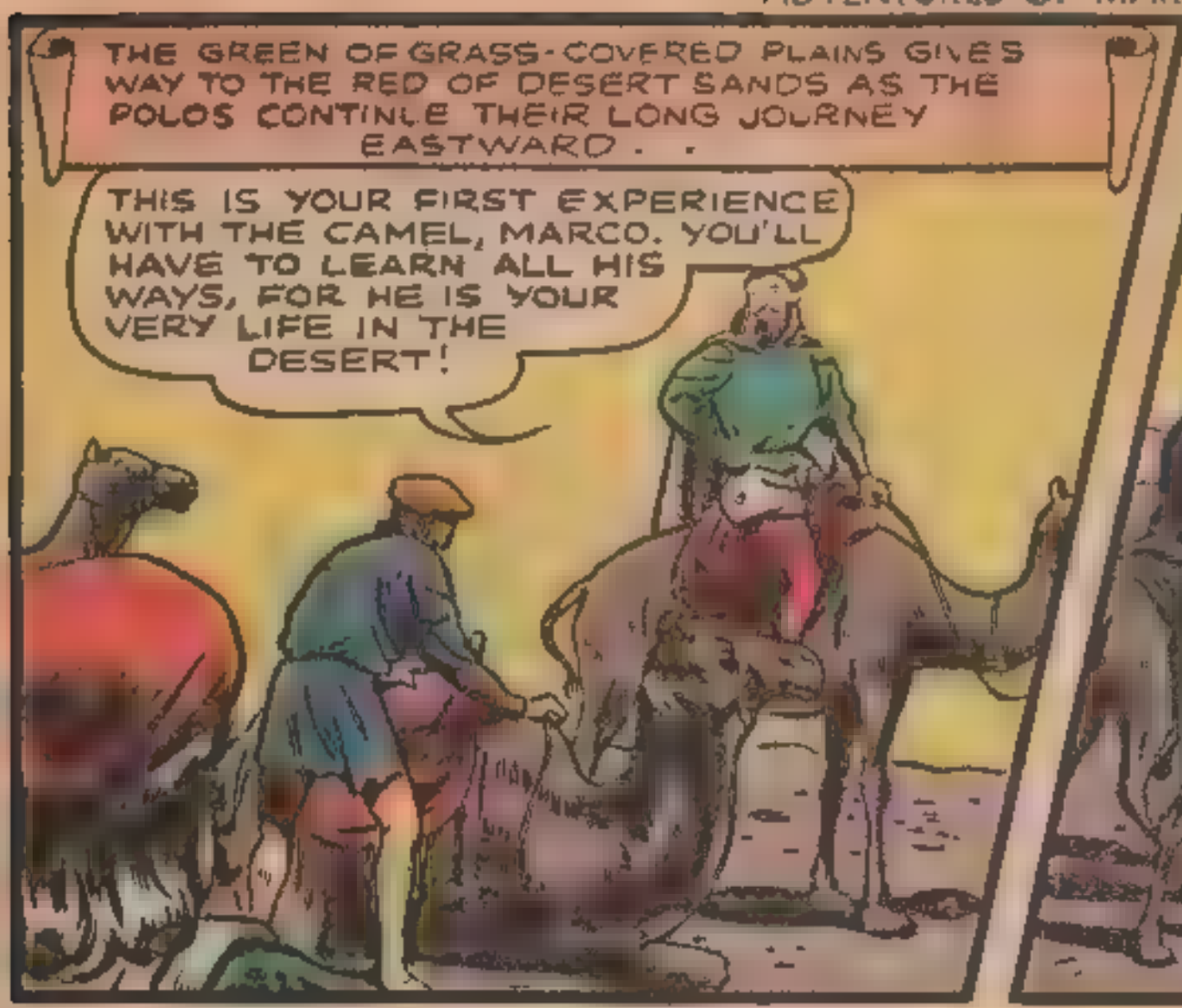
COME! BACK TO THEIR CAMP SITE. . THEY HAVE LEFT ENOUGH WORTHY OF OUR LOOTING. IT IS USELESS TO ATTEMPT SCALING THESE WALLS! WE RIDE ON!

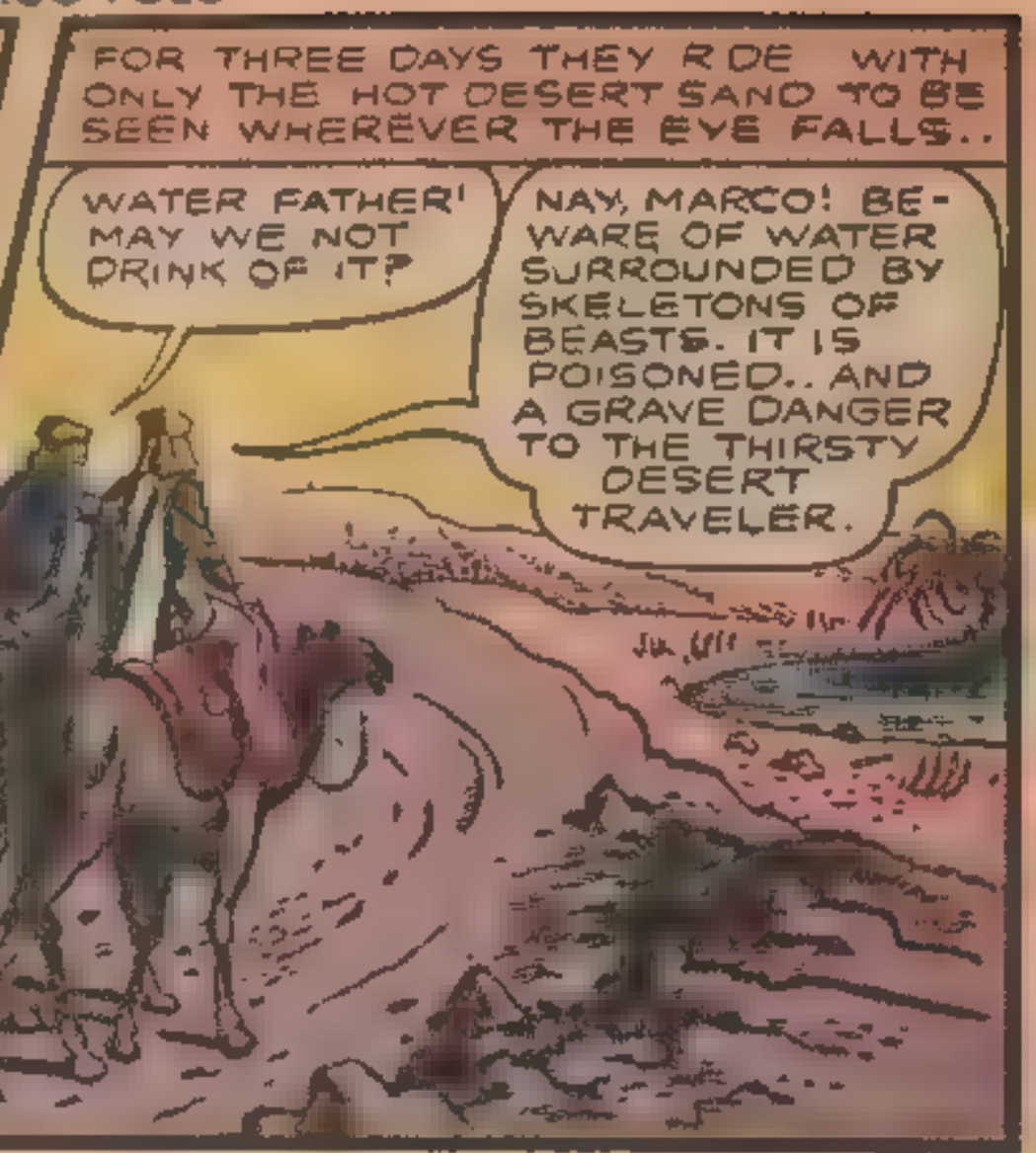

BEASTLY IN THEIR FEROCIOUSNESS, THE BANDITS SEIZE THE RICHES LEFT BY THE PANIC-STRICKEN MERCHANTS . . .
HA! A RANSOM FIT FOR A KING! WE'VE DONE WELL DESPITE YON DECEIVING YOUTH!

AND LIKE SAVAGE BARBARIANS, THE DESTROY WHAT THEY CANNOT CARRY AWAY . . .
HA! A WONDROUS SIGHT!


MEANWHILE. . AT KONSALMI CASTLE . . .
THEY HAVE BURNED OUR TENTS! THIS IS NOT A HEALTHY COUNTRY FOR TRAVELERS!
THAT IS TRUE, FATHER. . I WONDER HOW THEY TRAVELED IN DARKNESS. . AT NOON!?

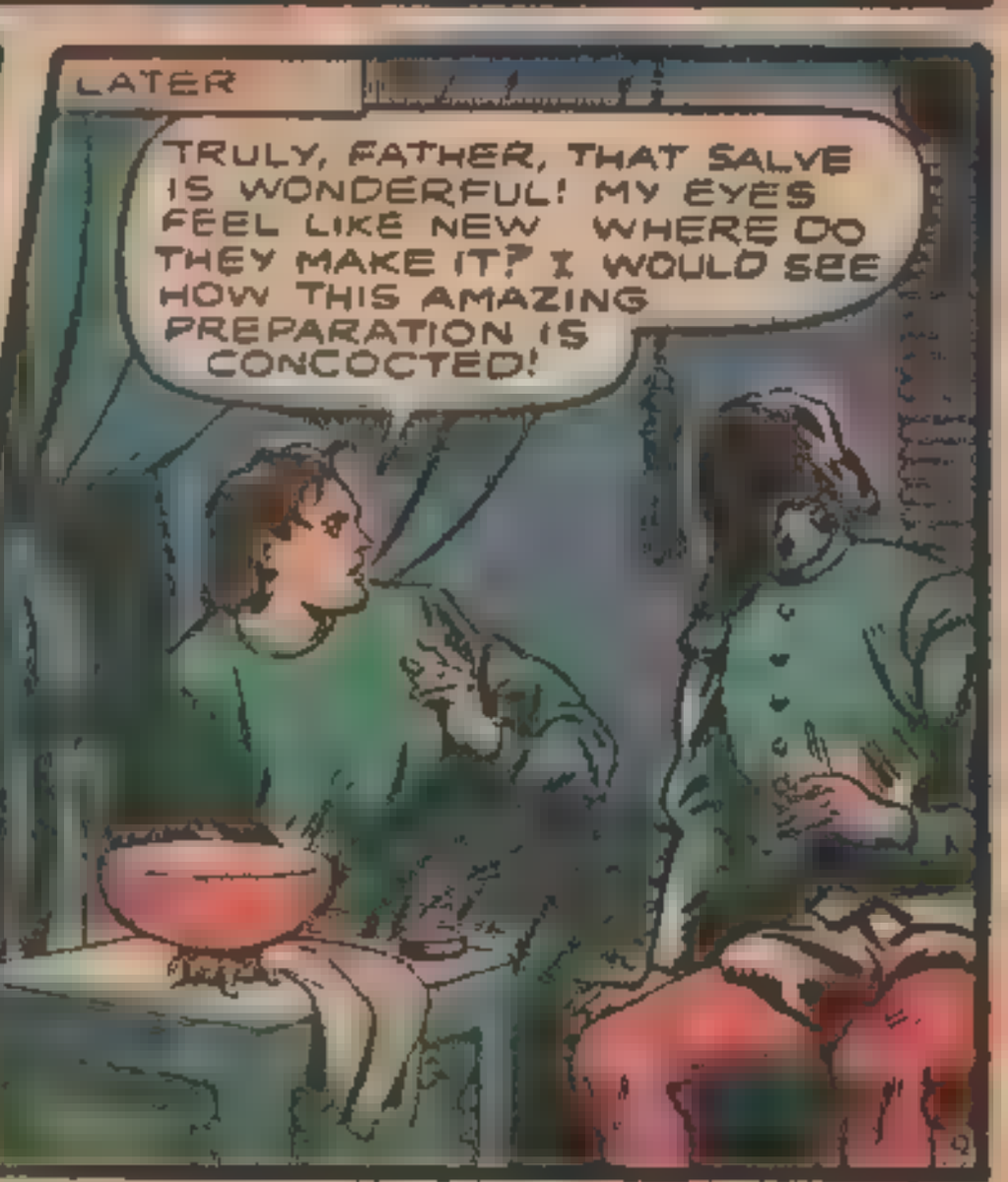

PERHAPS YOU CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION LORD OF KONSALMI?
WELL. . SOME SAY IT IS MAGIC. . I SAY NO. . COROBAR HAS MADE A BRILLIANT STUDY OF SANDSTORMS. WHERE THESE STORMS TRAVEL YOU WILL FIND COROBAR. . LOOTING. . PILLAGING. . KILLING!

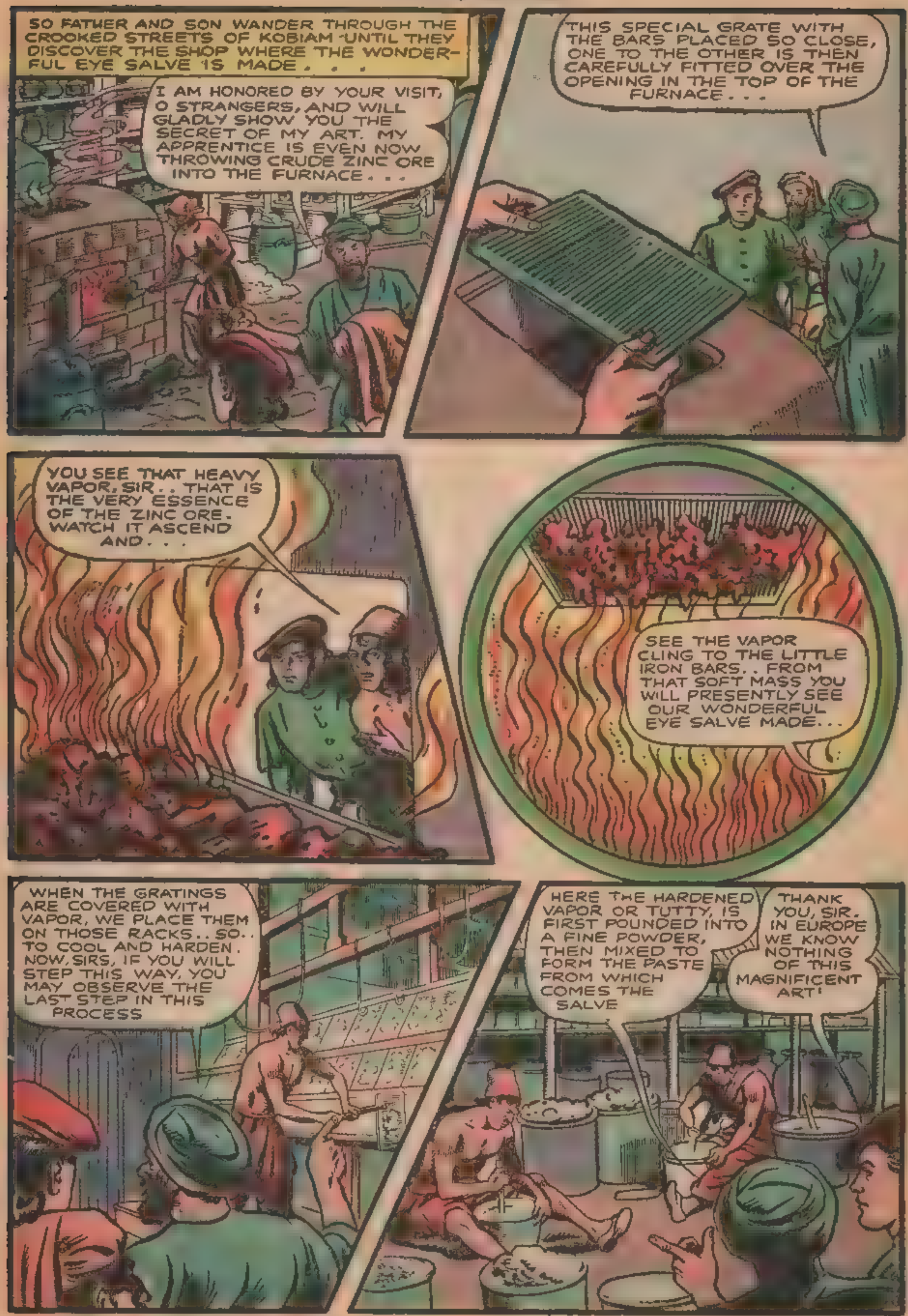

THE GREEN OF GRASS-COVERED PLAINS GIVES WAY TO THE RED OF DESERT SANDS AS THE POLOS CONTINUE THEIR LONG JOURNEY EASTWARD . .
THIS IS YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH THE CAMEL, MARCO. YOU'LL HAVE TO LEARN ALL HIS WAYS, FOR HE IS YOUR VERY LIFE IN THE DESERT!

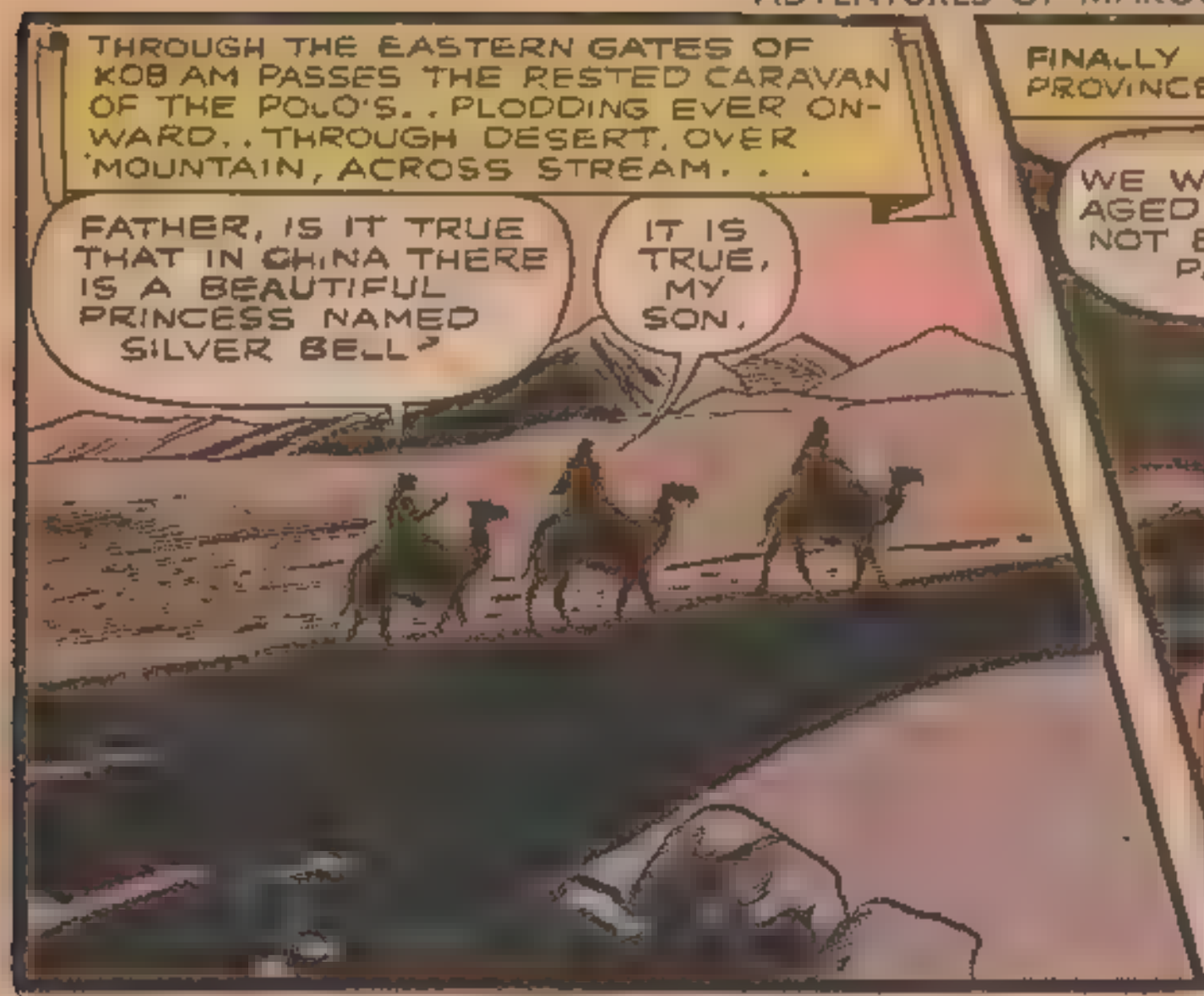

FOR THREE DAYS THEY RIDE WITH ONLY THE HOT DESERT SAND TO BE SEEN WHEREVER THE EYE FALLS..
WATER FATHER! MAY WE NOT DRINK OF IT?
NAY, MARCO! BEWARE OF WATER SURROUNDED BY SKELETONS OF BEASTS. IT IS POISONED.. AND A GRAVE DANGER TO THE THIRSTY DESERT TRAVELER.

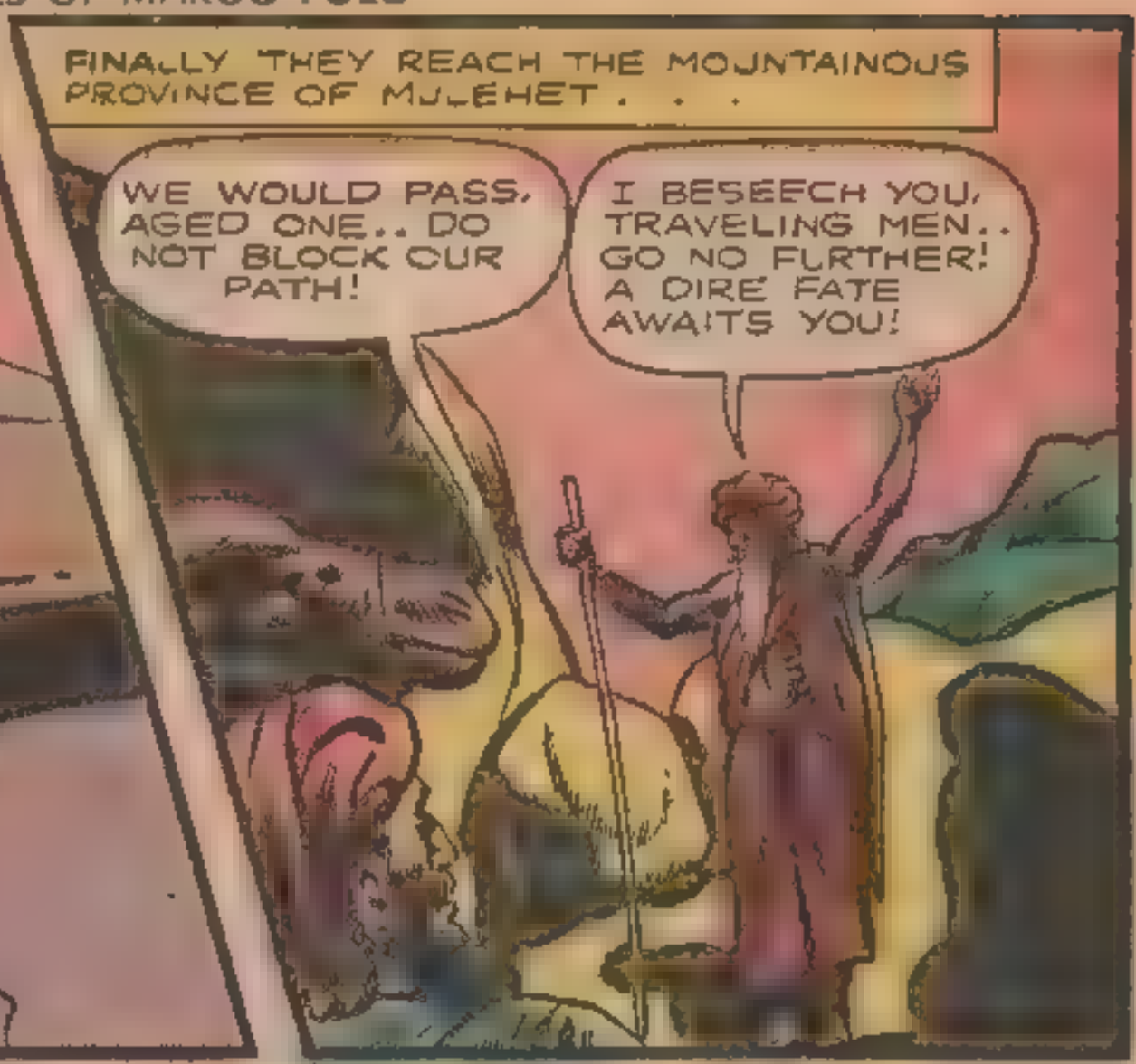
BUT AT LAST.
THIS WATER IS PURE, MY SON. DRINK YOUR FILL.. AND STORE MORE IN YOUR CANTEEN. WE STILL HAVE THREE DAYS JOURNEY BEFORE WE COME TO THE NEXT SAFE WATER!
AT LAST KOBIAM!

'TIS COMFORTABLE HERE, FATHER BUT MY EYES ACHE FROM THE DESERT GLARE
I HAVE HEARD THAT THEY HAVE A SALVE HERE WHICH MAKES TIRED EYES LIKE NEW I'LL GET SOME

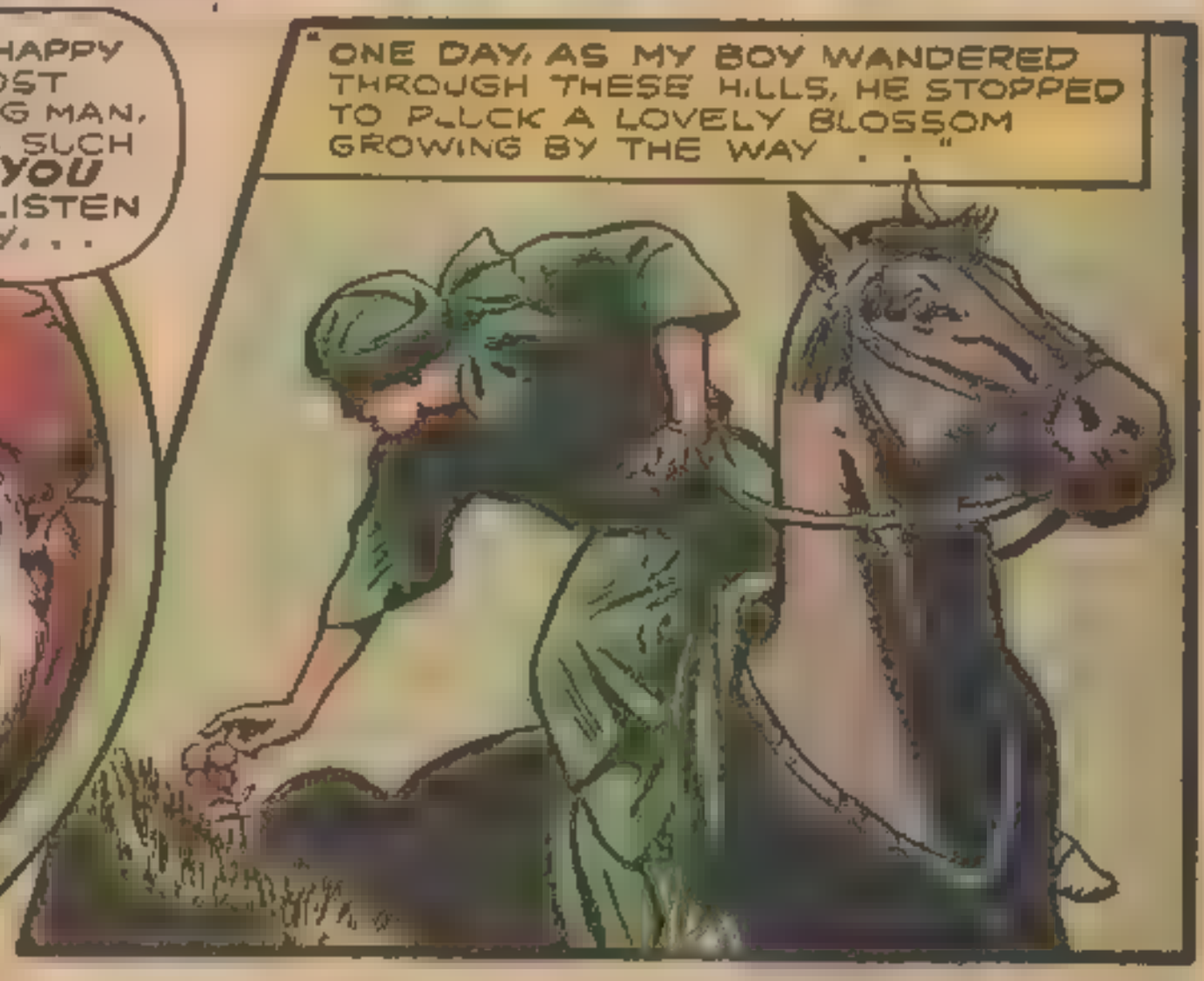

LATER
TRULY, FATHER, THAT SALVE IS WONDERFUL! MY EYES FEEL LIKE NEW WHERE DO THEY MAKE IT? I WOULD SEE HOW THIS AMAZING PREPARATION IS CONCOCTED!

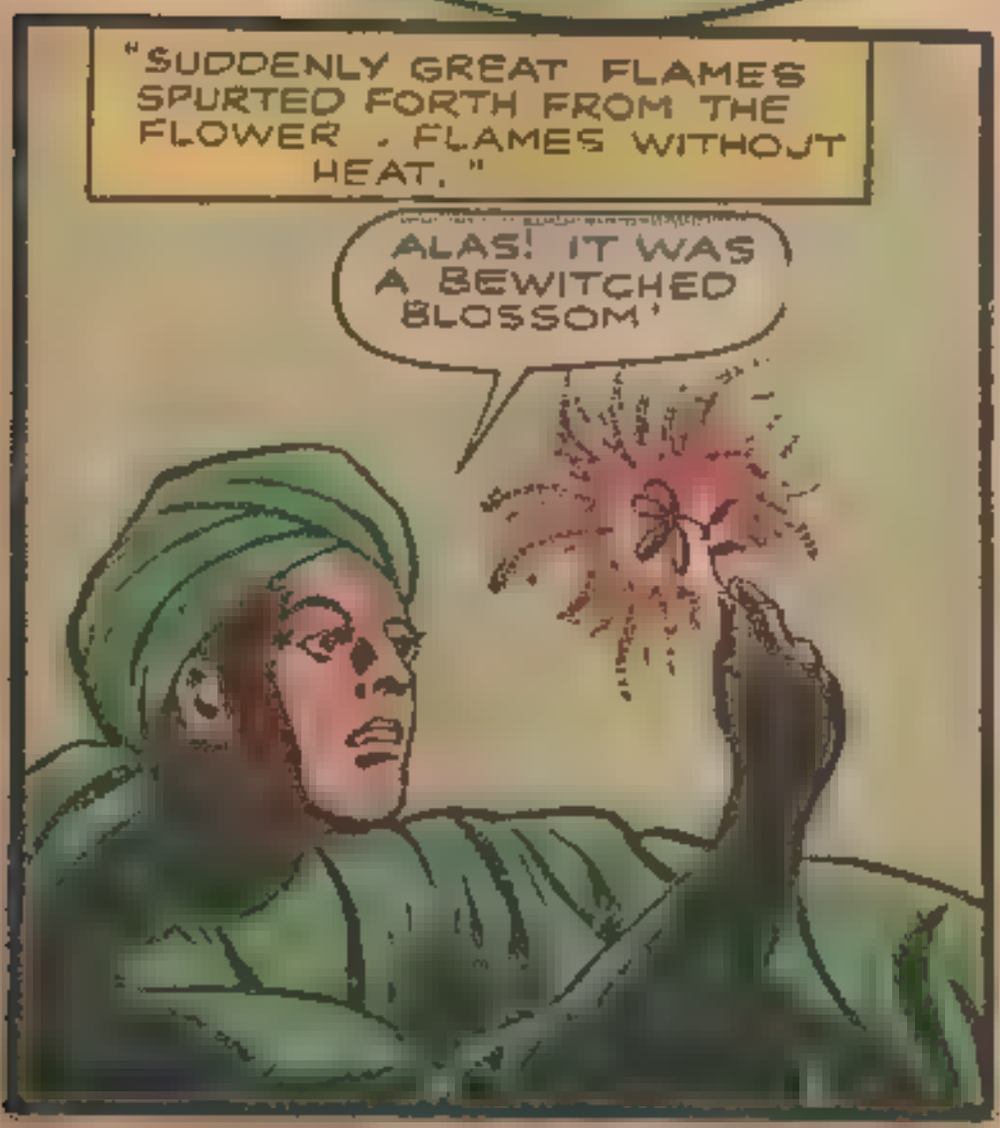

SO FATHER AND SON WANDER THROUGH THE CROOKED STREETS OF KOBIAM UNTIL THEY DISCOVER THE SHOP WHERE THE WONDERFUL EYE SALVE IS MADE . . .
I AM HONORED BY YOUR VISIT, O STRANGERS, AND WILL GLADLY SHOW YOU THE SECRET OF MY ART. MY APPRENTICE IS EVEN NOW THROWING CRUDE ZINC ORE INTO THE FURNACE . . .
THIS SPECIAL GRATE WITH THE BARS PLACED SO CLOSE, ONE TO THE OTHER IS THEN CAREFULLY FITTED OVER THE OPENING IN THE TOP OF THE FURNACE . . .
YOU SEE THAT HEAVY VAPOR, SIR . . THAT IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE ZINC ORE. WATCH IT ASCEND AND . . .
SEE THE VAPOR CLING TO THE LITTLE IRON BARS . . FROM THAT SOFT MASS YOU WILL PRESENTLY SEE OUR WONDERFUL EYE SALVE MADE . . .
WHEN THE GRATINGS ARE COVERED WITH VAPOR, WE PLACE THEM ON THOSE RACKS . . SO . . TO COOL AND HARDEN. NOW, SIRS, IF YOU WILL STEP THIS WAY, YOU MAY OBSERVE THE LAST STEP IN THIS PROCESS
HERE THE HARDENED VAPOR OR TUTTY, IS FIRST POUNDED INTO A FINE POWDER, THEN MIXED TO FORM THE PASTE FROM WHICH COMES THE SALVE
THANK YOU, SIR. IN EUROPE WE KNOW NOTHING OF THIS MAGNIFICENT ART!


THROUGH THE EASTERN GATES OF KOB AM PASSES THE RESTED CARAVAN OF THE POLO'S.. PLODDING EVER ONWARD.. THROUGH DESERT, OVER MOUNTAIN, ACROSS STREAM. . .
FATHER, IS IT TRUE THAT IN CHINA THERE IS A BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS NAMED SILVER BELL?
IT IS TRUE, MY SON.

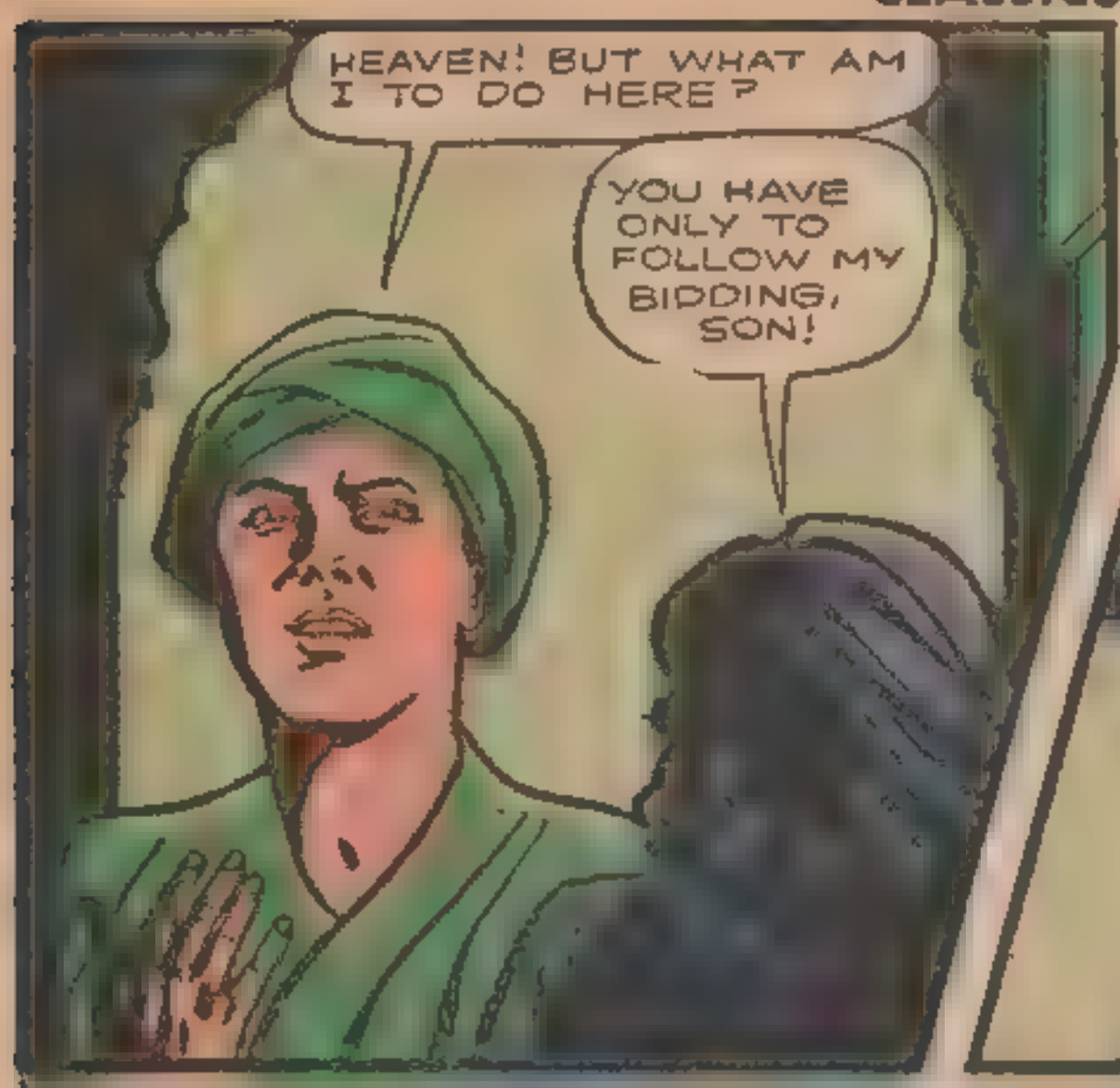

FINALLY THEY REACH THE MOUNTAINOUS PROVINCE OF MULEHET . . .
WE WOULD PASS, AGED ONE.. DO NOT BLOCK OUR PATH!
I BESEECH YOU, TRAVELING MEN.. GO NO FURTHER! A DIRE FATE AWAITS YOU!

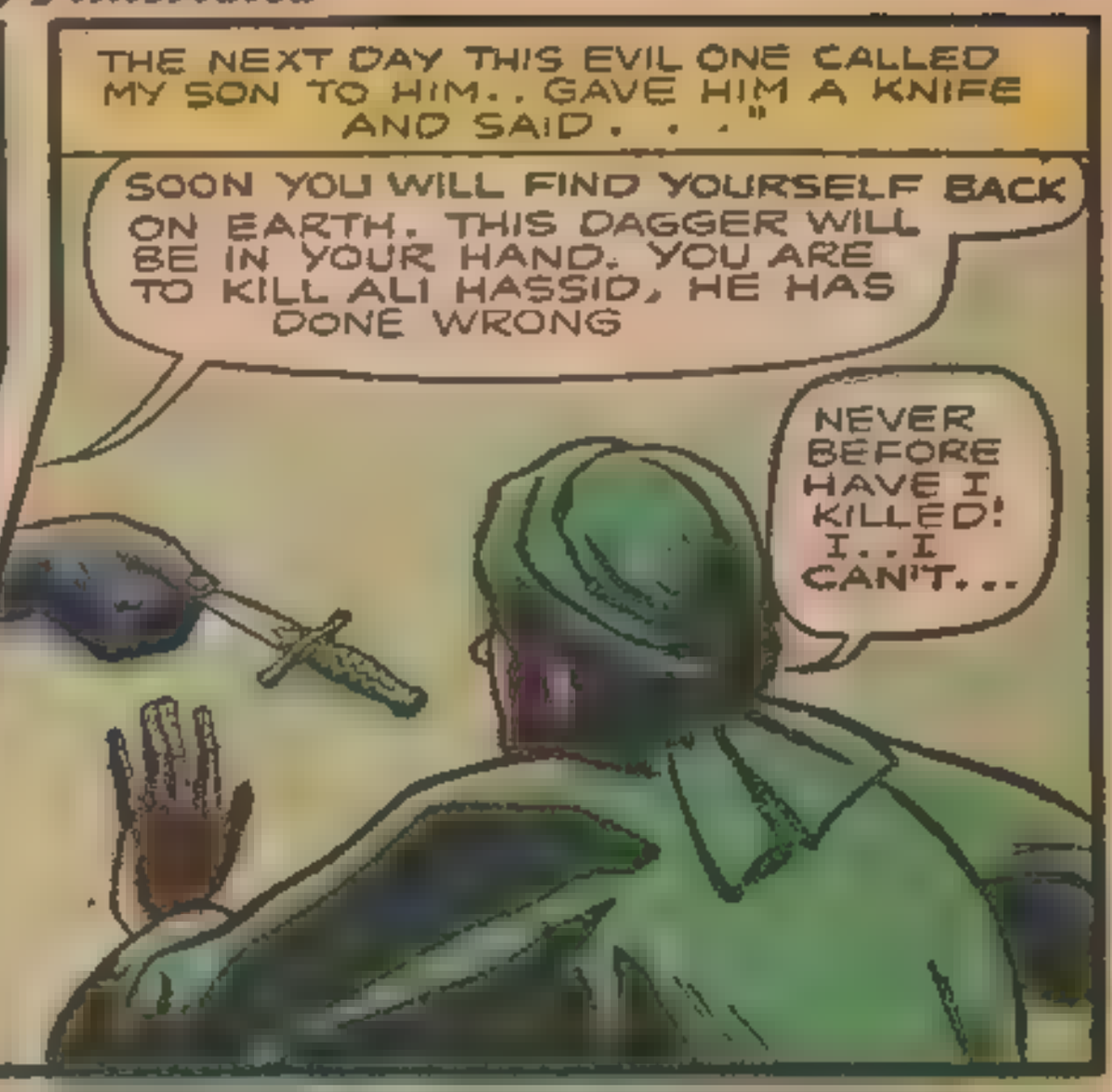
BAH! WE HAVE BRAVED SO MANY DANGERS, WE FEAR ALMOST NOTHING!
I AM INDEED HAPPY YOU SAID ALMOST NOTHING, YOUNG MAN, FOR AHEAD IS SUCH EVIL AS EVEN YOU MUST FEAR..LISTEN TO MY STORY. . .

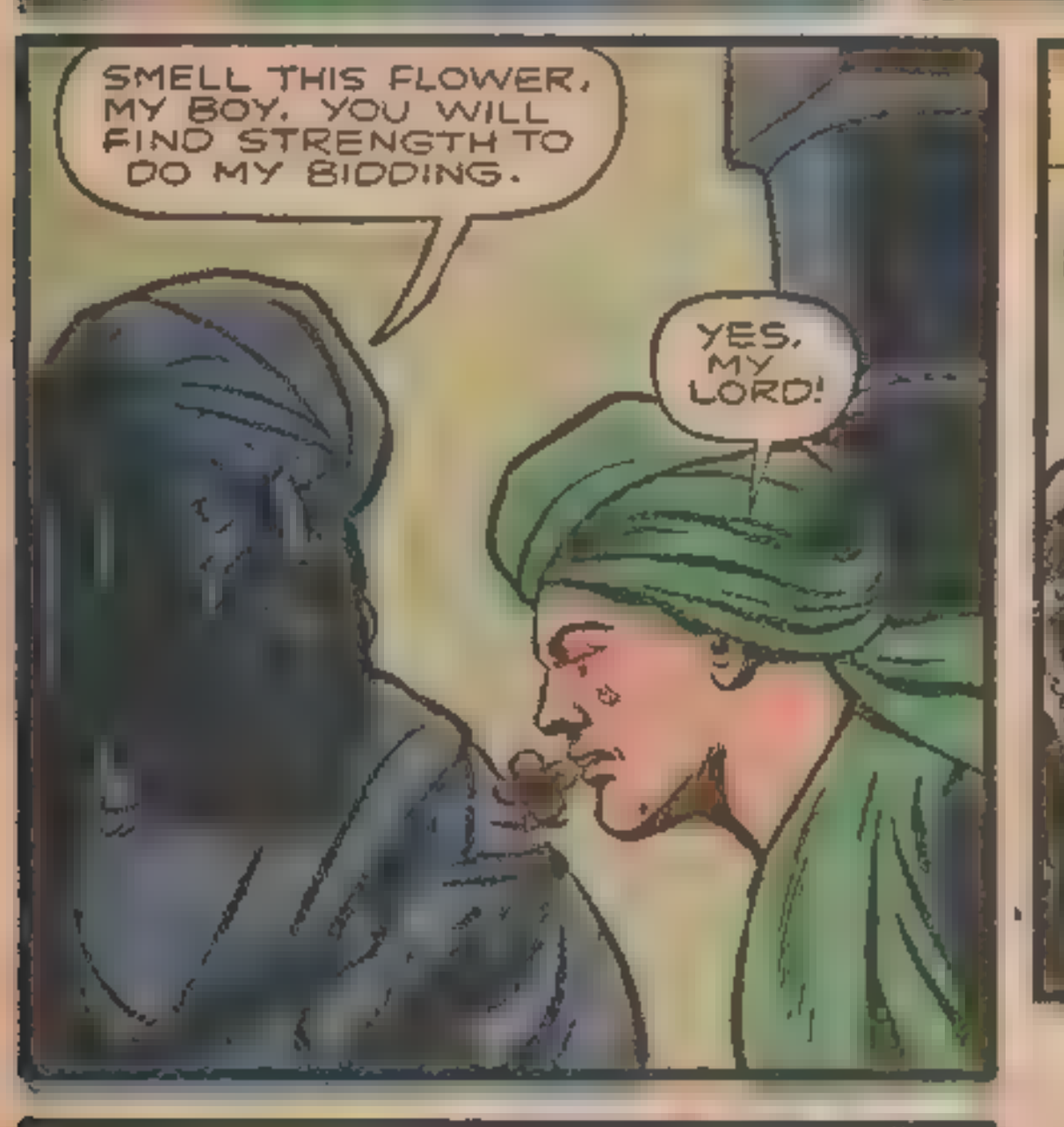

"ONE DAY, AS MY BOY WANDERED THROUGH THESE HILLS, HE STOPPED TO PLUCK A LOVELY BLOSSOM GROWING BY THE WAY . . ."


"SUDDENLY GREAT FLAMES SPURTED FORTH FROM THE FLOWER . FLAMES WITHOUT HEAT."
ALAS! IT WAS A BEWITCHED BLOSSOM!

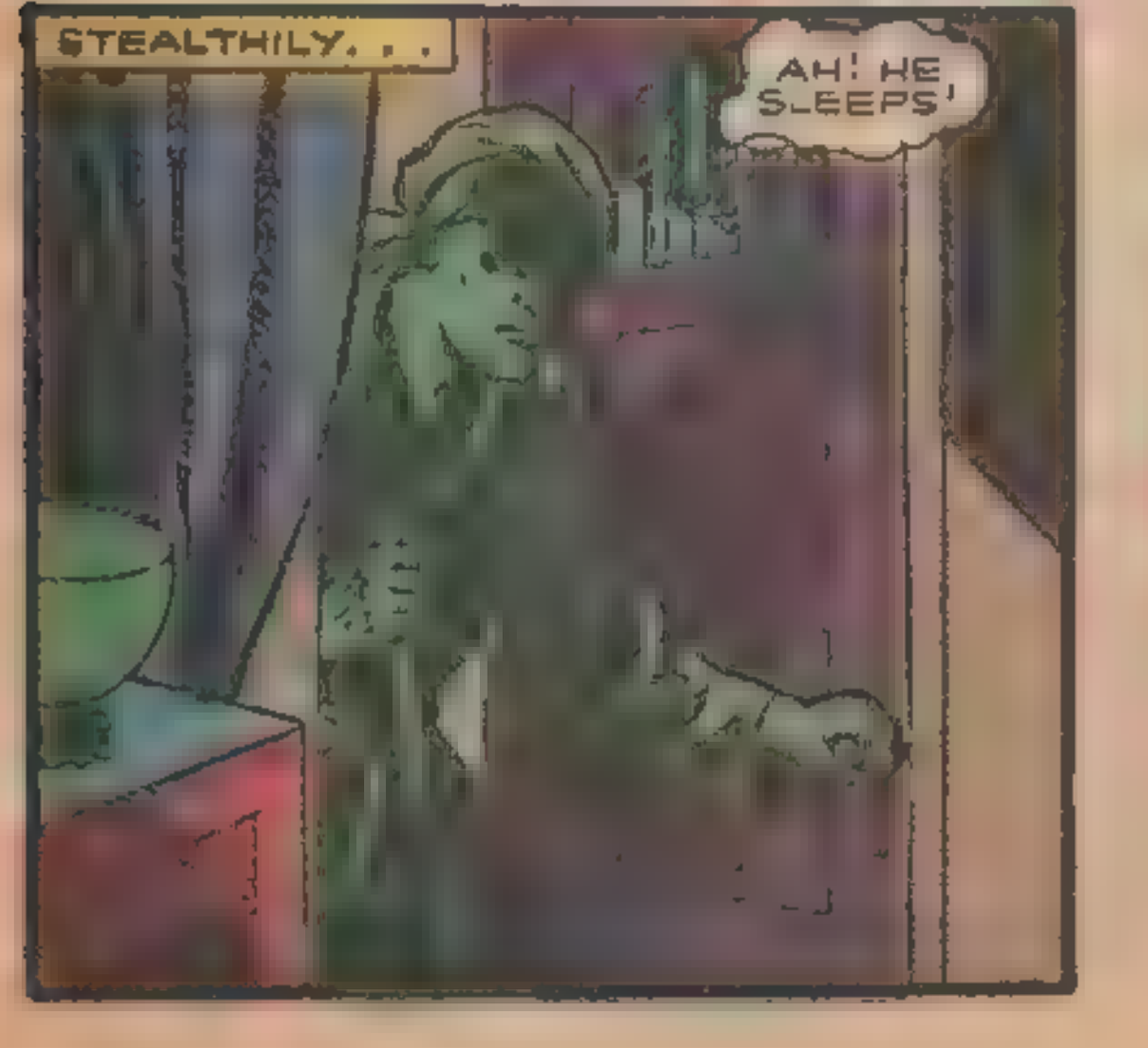
"LATER, AS MY POOR BOY OPENED HIS EYES TO A SCENE OF BEAUTEOUS SPLENDOR..HE SAW. . ."
WH.. WHERE AM I?
YOU ARE DEAD, MY SON! THIS IS HEAVEN!


HEAVEN! BUT WHAT AM I TO DO HERE?
YOU HAVE ONLY TO FOLLOW MY BIDDING, SON!

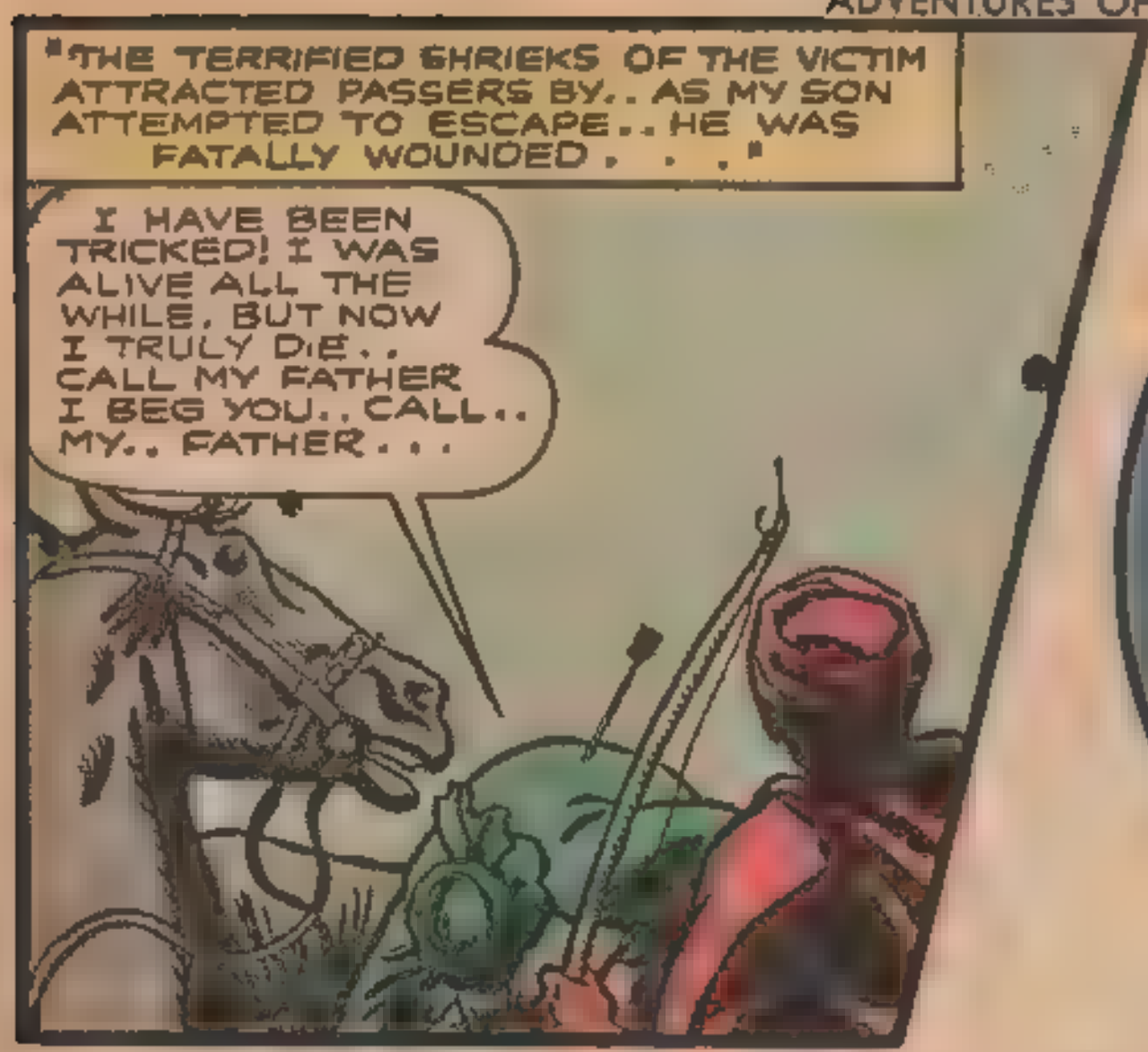

THE NEXT DAY THIS EVIL ONE CALLED MY SON TO HIM.. GAVE HIM A KNIFE AND SAID. . ."
SOON YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF BACK ON EARTH. THIS DAGGER WILL BE IN YOUR HAND. YOU ARE TO KILL ALI HASSID, HE HAS DONE WRONG
NEVER BEFORE HAVE I KILLED! I..I CAN'T...


SMELL THIS FLOWER, MY BOY. YOU WILL FIND STRENGTH TO DO MY BIDDING.
YES, MY LORD!

WHEN MY SON AWOKE, HE WAS IN THE HILLS ONCE MORE.. A KNIFE IN HIS UNSULLIED HANDS. . ."
I HAVE NEVER KILLED BEFORE.. YET I MUST OBEY THE ORDERS OF THE RULER OF HEAVEN. I WILL KILL...

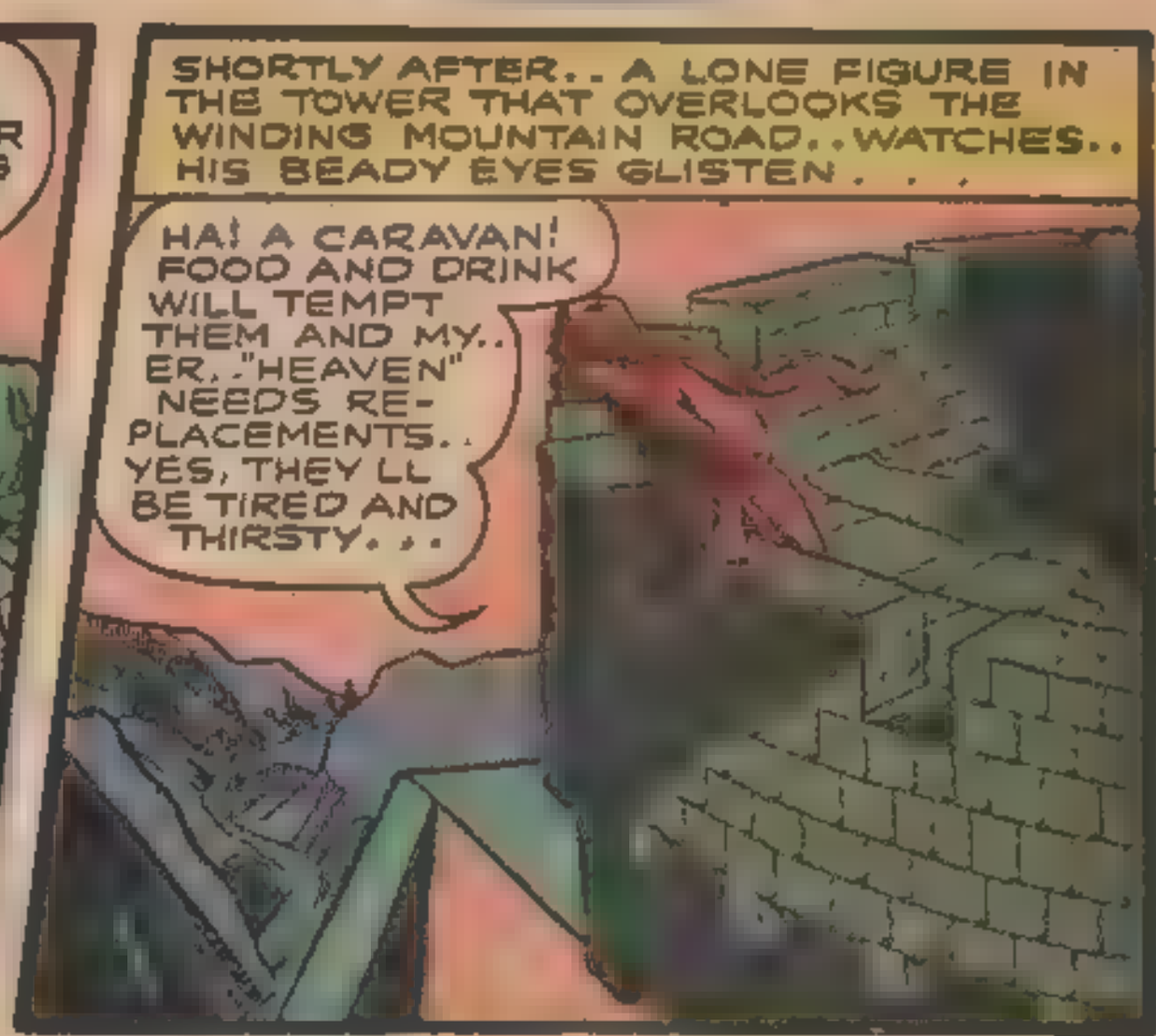

STEALTHILY. . .
AH! HE SLEEPS!

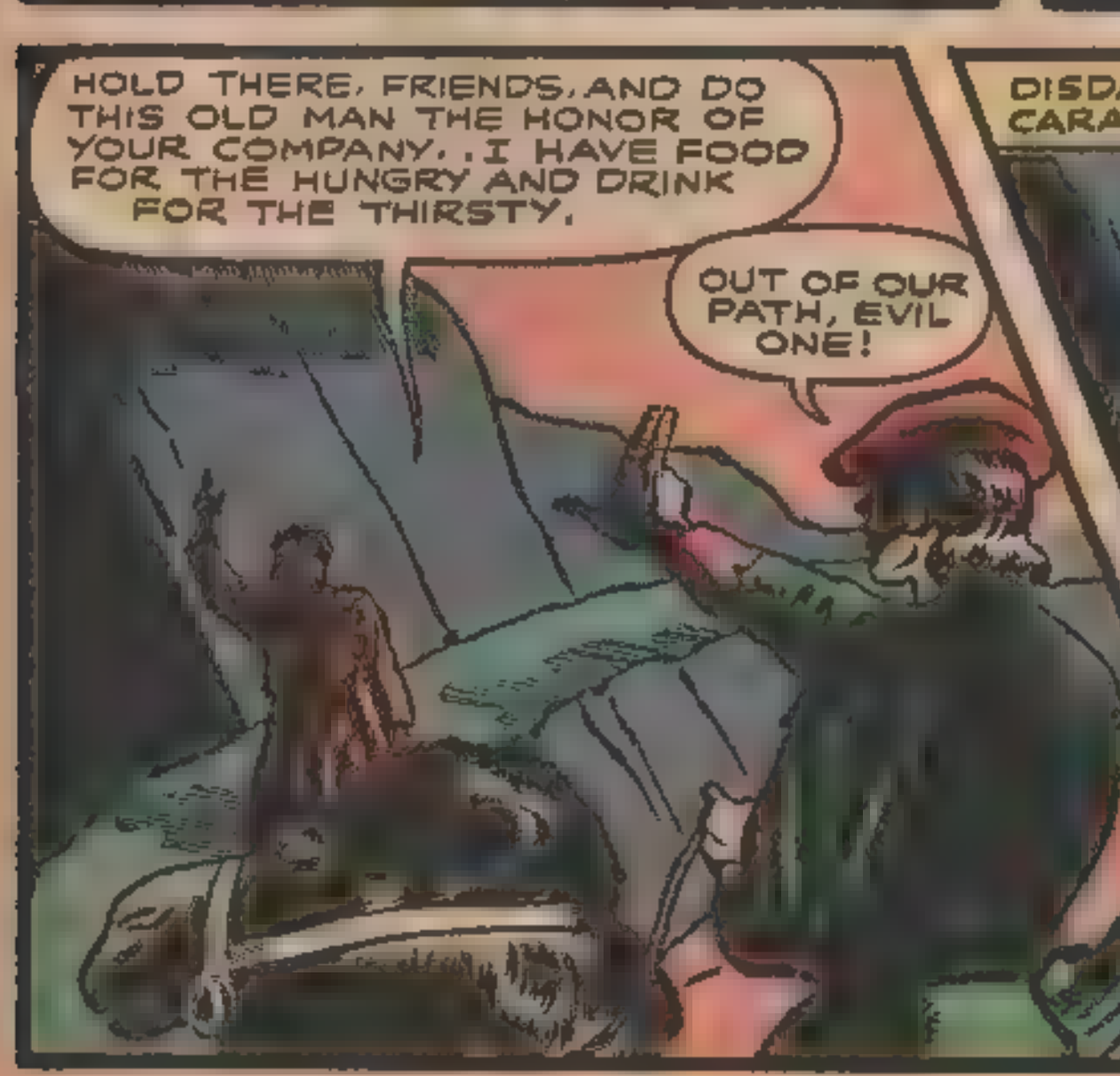
AND.. DIES..

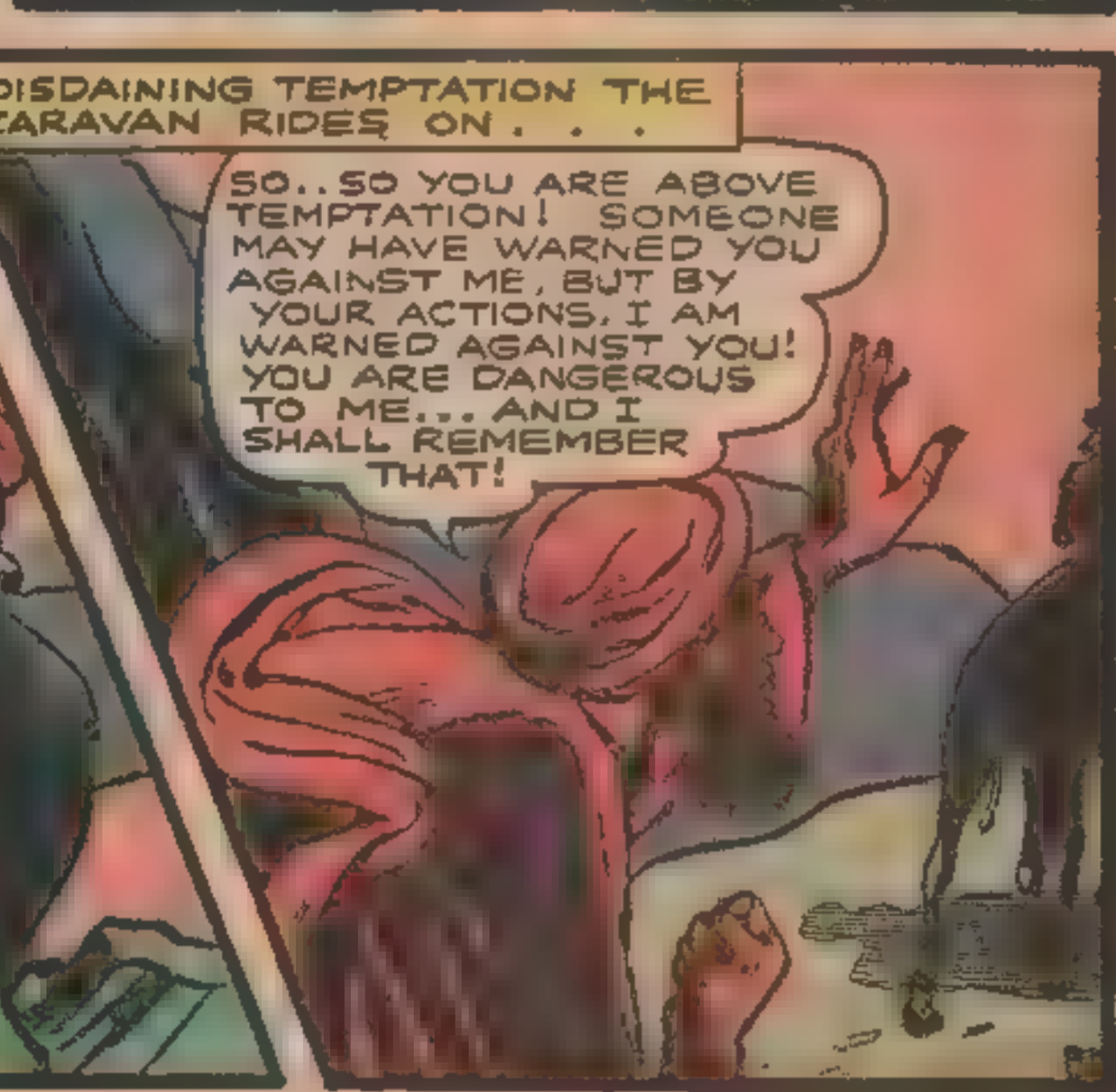

"THE TERRIFIED SHRIEKS OF THE VICTIM ATTRACTED PASSERS BY.. AS MY SON ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE.. HE WAS FATALLY WOUNDED . . ."
I HAVE BEEN TRICKED! I WAS ALIVE ALL THE WHILE, BUT NOW I TRULY DIE.. CALL MY FATHER I BEG YOU.. CALL.. MY.. FATHER . . .

FATHER.. YOU.. HAVE HEARD MY.. STORY.. YOU MUST WARN.. WARN EVERYBODY.. AGAINST THE.. OLD.. MAN.. OF THE MOUNTAIN!

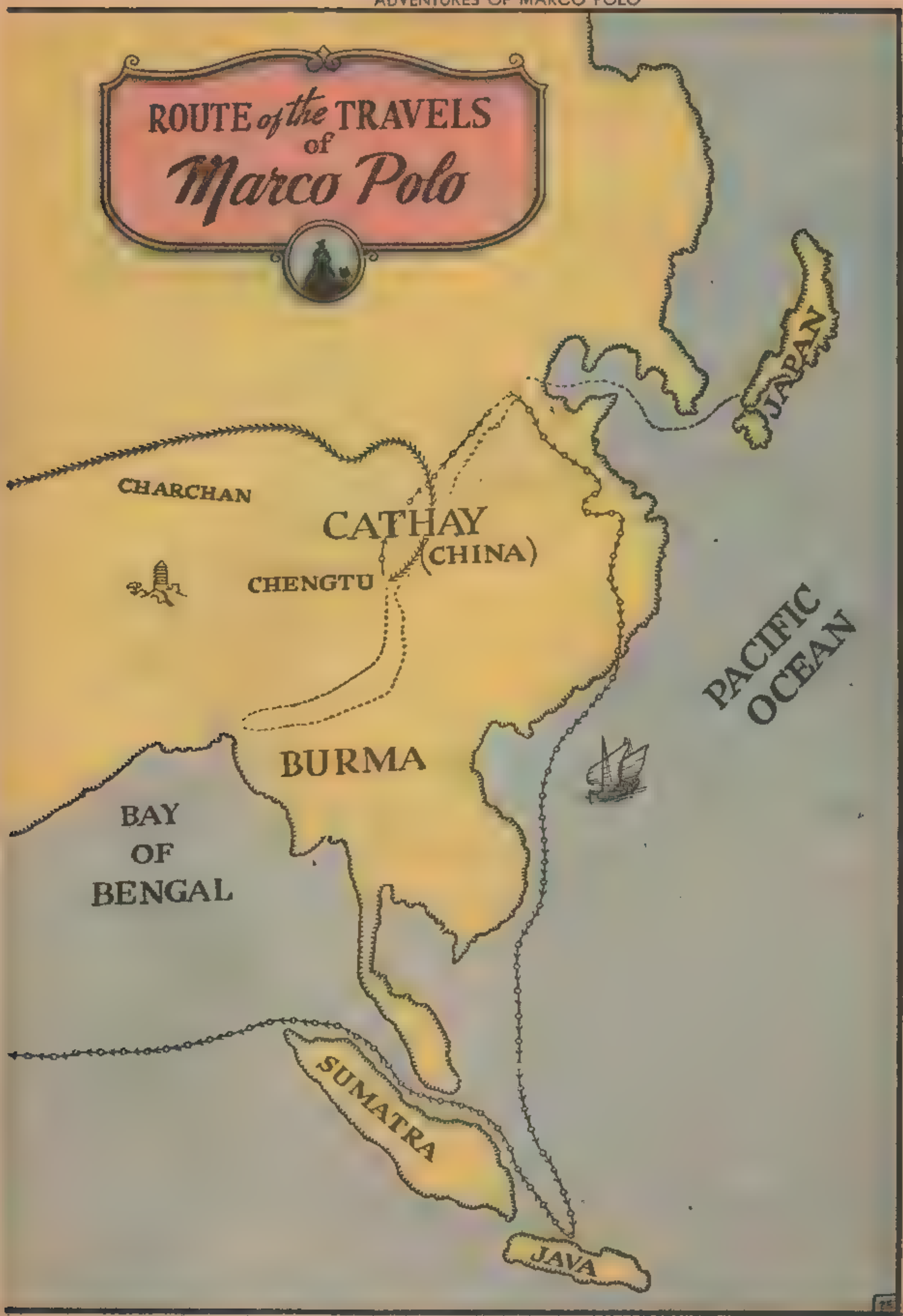
I HAVE TOLD YOU THIS STORY TO WARN YOU.. DON'T GO INTO THE MOUNTAINS!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR STORY, BUT NOTHING CAN STOP US.. NEITHER THE TALE OF A YOUNG MAN NOR THAT OF AN OLD ONE!

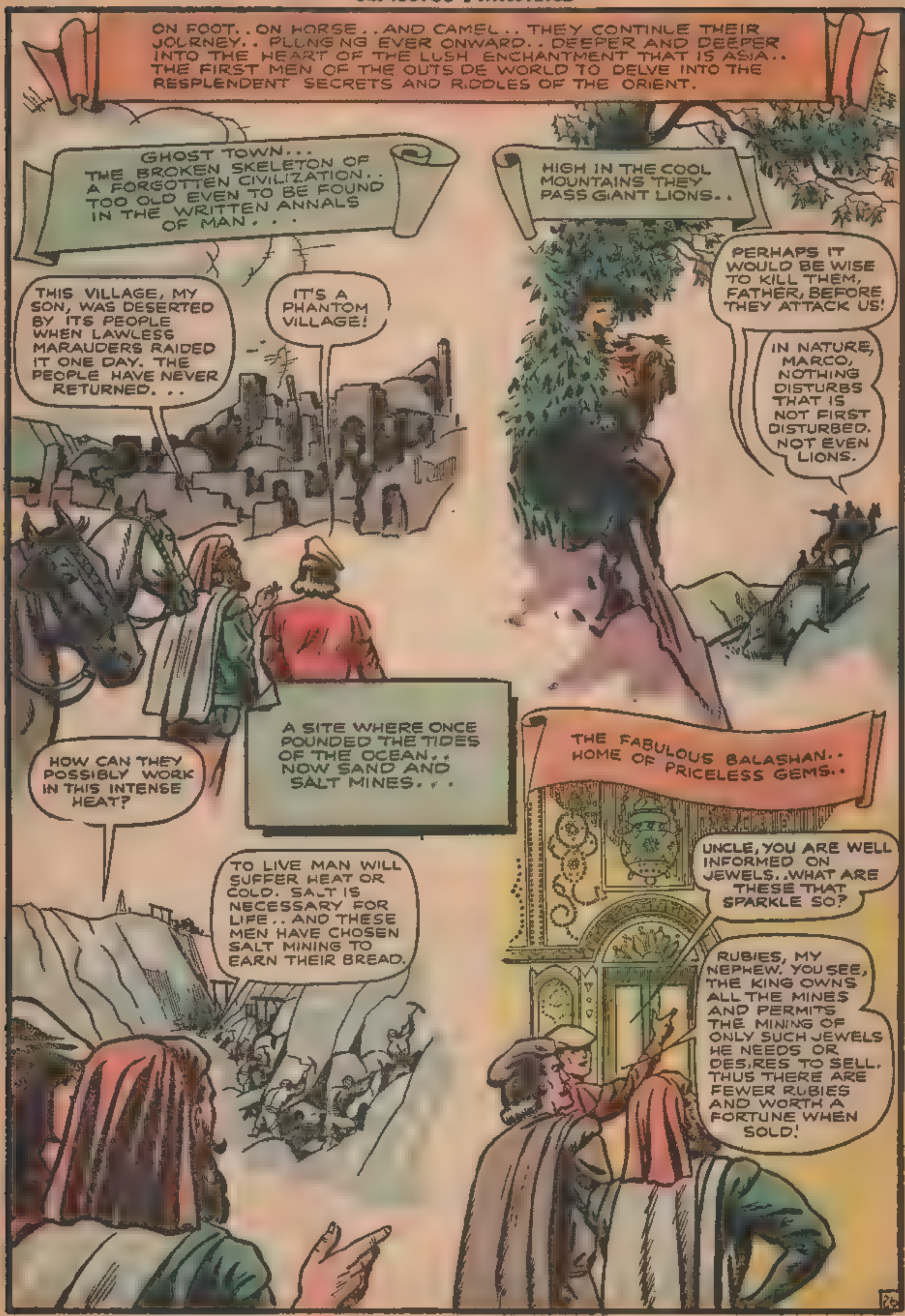

SHORTLY AFTER.. A LONE FIGURE IN THE TOWER THAT OVERLOOKS THE WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD.. WATCHES.. HIS BEADY EYES GLISTEN . . .
HA! A CARAVAN! FOOD AND DRINK WILL TEMPT THEM AND MY.. ER.. "HEAVEN" NEEDS RE-PLACEMENTS.. YES, THEY LL BE TIRED AND THIRSTY. . .

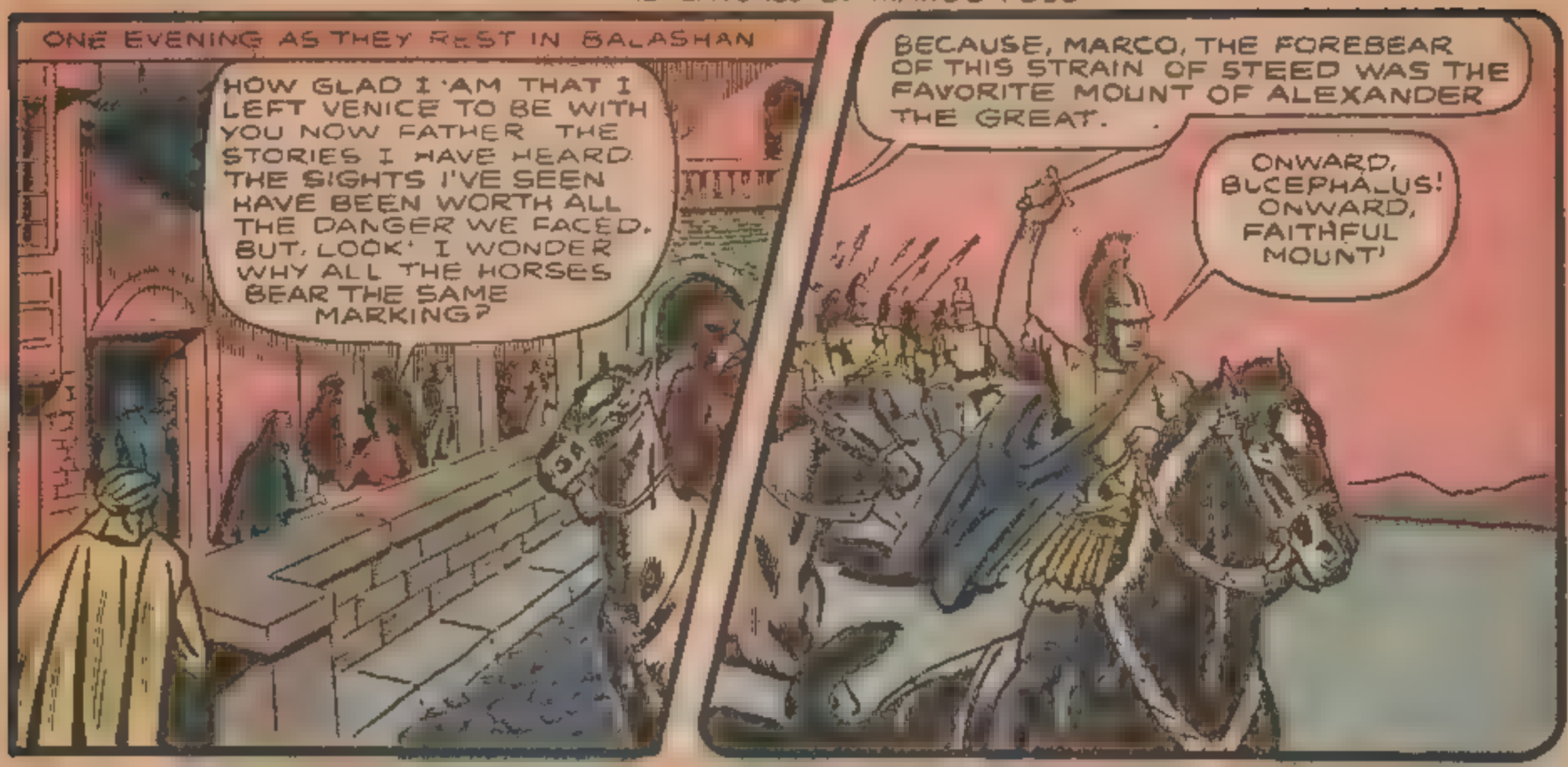

HOLD THERE, FRIENDS, AND DO THIS OLD MAN THE HONOR OF YOUR COMPANY.. I HAVE FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY AND DRINK FOR THE THIRSTY.
OUT OF OUR PATH, EVIL ONE!

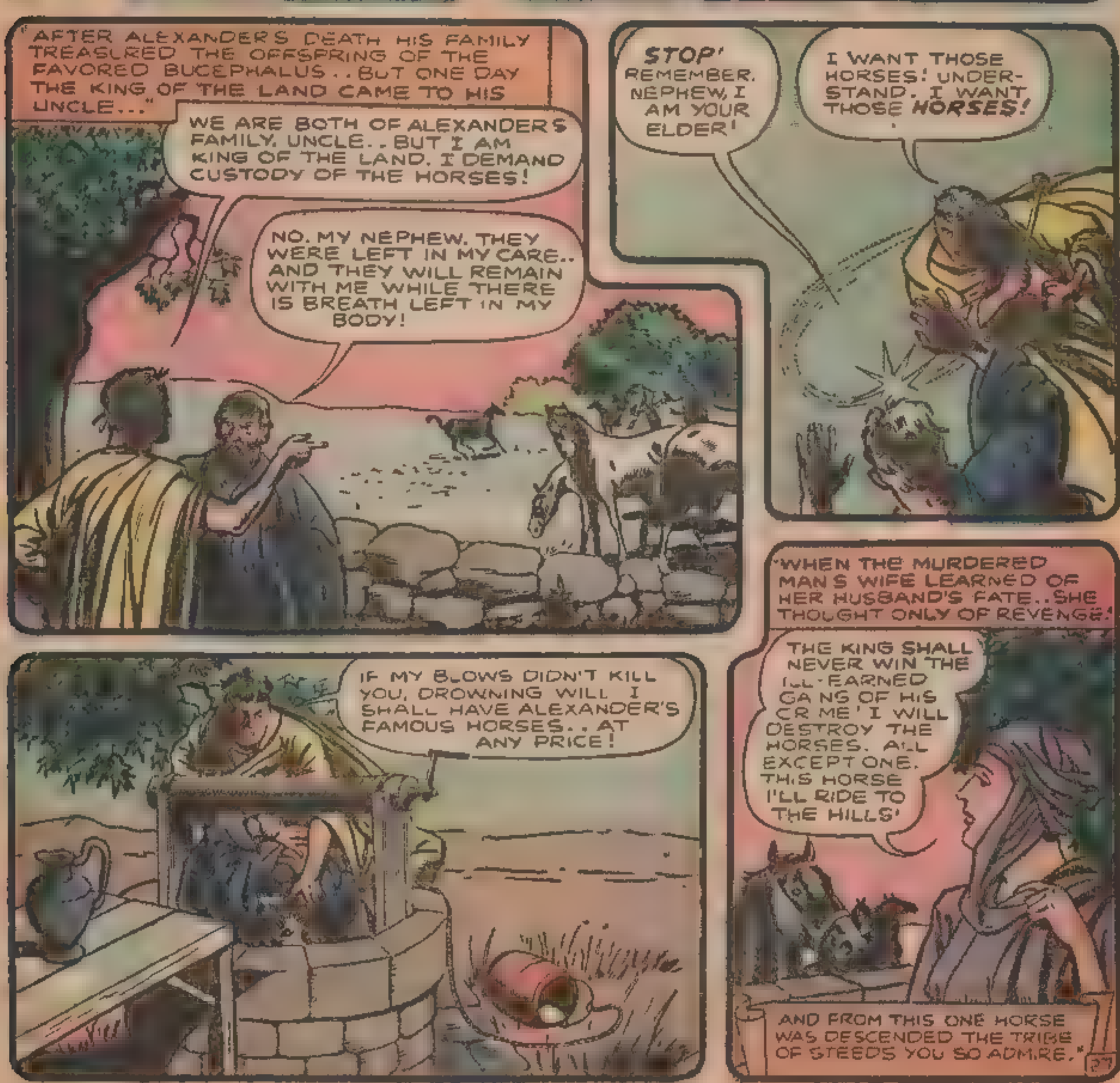

DISDAINING TEMPTATION THE CARAVAN RIDES ON . . .
SO.. SO YOU ARE ABOVE TEMPTATION! SOMEONE MAY HAVE WARNED YOU AGAINST ME, BUT BY YOUR ACTIONS, I AM WARNED AGAINST YOU! YOU ARE DANGEROUS TO ME... AND I SHALL REMEMBER THAT!

VENICE
CONSTANTINOPLE
BLACK SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
GEORGIA
CASPIAN SEA
ARAL SEA
MULEHET
BALASHAN
KASHGAR
KHOTAN
BAGHDAD
TIGRIS R.
PERSIA
KERMAN
PERSIAN GULF
ARABIA
RED SEA
AFRICA
INDIA
ARABIAN SEA
CEYLON
ROUTE TO CHINA
TRIPS WHILE LIVING IN CHINA.
ROUTE BACK TO VENICE


ROUTE of the TRAVELS of Marco Polo
JAPAN
CHARCHAN
CATHAY
(CHINA)
CHENGTU
PACIFIC OCEAN
BURMA
BAY OF BENGAL
SUMATRA
JAVA


ON FOOT..ON HORSE..AND CAMEL.. THEY CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY.. PLUNGING EVER ONWARD.. DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE HEART OF THE LUSH ENCHANTMENT THAT IS ASIA.. THE FIRST MEN OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD TO DELVE INTO THE RESPLENDENT SECRETS AND RIDDLES OF THE ORIENT.
GHOST TOWN... THE BROKEN SKELETON OF A FORGOTTEN CIVILIZATION.. TOO OLD EVEN TO BE FOUND IN THE WRITTEN ANNALS OF MAN...
THIS VILLAGE, MY SON, WAS DESERTED BY ITS PEOPLE WHEN LAWLESS MARAUDERS RAIDED IT ONE DAY. THE PEOPLE HAVE NEVER RETURNED...
IT'S A PHANTOM VILLAGE!
HIGH IN THE COOL MOUNTAINS THEY PASS GIANT LIONS..
PERHAPS IT WOULD BE WISE TO KILL THEM, FATHER, BEFORE THEY ATTACK US!
IN NATURE, MARCO, NOTHING DISTURBS THAT IS NOT FIRST DISTURBED. NOT EVEN LIONS.
A SITE WHERE ONCE POUNDED THE TIDES OF THE OCEAN.. NOW SAND AND SALT MINES...
HOW CAN THEY POSSIBLY WORK IN THIS INTENSE HEAT?
TO LIVE MAN WILL SUFFER HEAT OR COLD. SALT IS NECESSARY FOR LIFE.. AND THESE MEN HAVE CHOSEN SALT MINING TO EARN THEIR BREAD.
THE FABULOUS BALASHAN.. HOME OF PRICELESS GEMS..
UNCLE, YOU ARE WELL INFORMED ON JEWELS..WHAT ARE THESE THAT SPARKLE SO?
RUBIES, MY NEPHEW. YOU SEE, THE KING OWNS ALL THE MINES AND PERMITS THE MINING OF ONLY SUCH JEWELS HE NEEDS OR DESIRES TO SELL. THUS THERE ARE FEWER RUBIES AND WORTH A FORTUNE WHEN SOLD!


ONE EVENING AS THEY REST IN BALASHAN
HOW GLAD I AM THAT I LEFT VENICE TO BE WITH YOU NOW FATHER THE STORIES I HAVE HEARD THE SIGHTS I'VE SEEN HAVE BEEN WORTH ALL THE DANGER WE FACED. BUT, LOOK! I WONDER WHY ALL THE HORSES BEAR THE SAME MARKING?
BECAUSE, MARCO, THE FOREBEAR OF THIS STRAIN OF STEED WAS THE FAVORITE MOUNT OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT.
ONWARD, BUCEPHALUS! ONWARD, FAITHFUL MOUNT!


"AFTER ALEXANDER'S DEATH HIS FAMILY TREASURED THE OFFSPRING OF THE FAVORED BUCEPHALUS.. BUT ONE DAY THE KING OF THE LAND CAME TO HIS UNCLE..."
WE ARE BOTH OF ALEXANDER'S FAMILY, UNCLE.. BUT I AM KING OF THE LAND. I DEMAND CUSTODY OF THE HORSES!
NO. MY NEPHEW. THEY WERE LEFT IN MY CARE.. AND THEY WILL REMAIN WITH ME WHILE THERE IS BREATH LEFT IN MY BODY!
STOP! REMEMBER, NEPHEW, I AM YOUR ELDER!
I WANT THOSE HORSES! UNDERSTAND. I WANT THOSE HORSES!
IF MY BLOWS DIDN'T KILL YOU, DROWNING WILL I SHALL HAVE ALEXANDER'S FAMOUS HORSES.. AT ANY PRICE!
"WHEN THE MURDERED MAN'S WIFE LEARNED OF HER HUSBAND'S FATE.. SHE THOUGHT ONLY OF REVENGE!
THE KING SHALL NEVER WIN THE ILL-EARNED GAINS OF HIS CRIME! I WILL DESTROY THE HORSES. ALL EXCEPT ONE. THIS HORSE I'LL RIDE TO THE HILLS!
AND FROM THIS ONE HORSE WAS DESCENDED THE TRIBE OF STEEDS YOU SO ADMIRE."

LATER.. AS MARCO AND HIS PARTY APPROACH THE VAST DOMAIN OF KUBLAI KHAN, A STRANGE EVENT TAKES PLACE . . .

THE POLOS..

...RETURN TO..

...CHINA!

THUS.. AS THEY ENTER THE OUTSKIRTS OF SHENGTU..

IN THE NAME OF KUBLAI KHAN, MIGHTY EMPEROR OF ALL CATHAY, I WELCOME YOU O ILLUSTRIOUS TRAVELERS FROM AFAR.

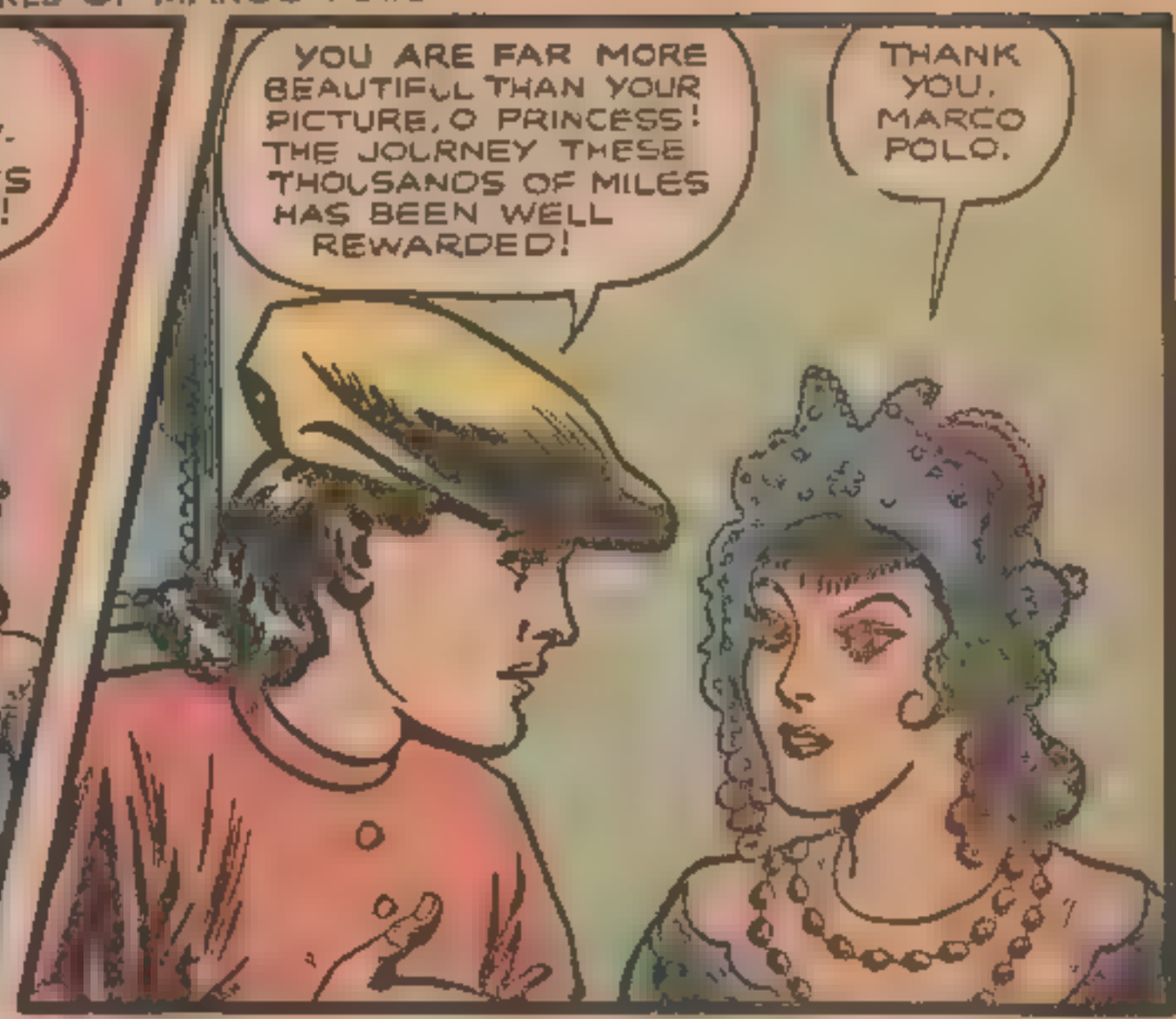
THANK YOU, SIR. BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW WE WERE COMING?

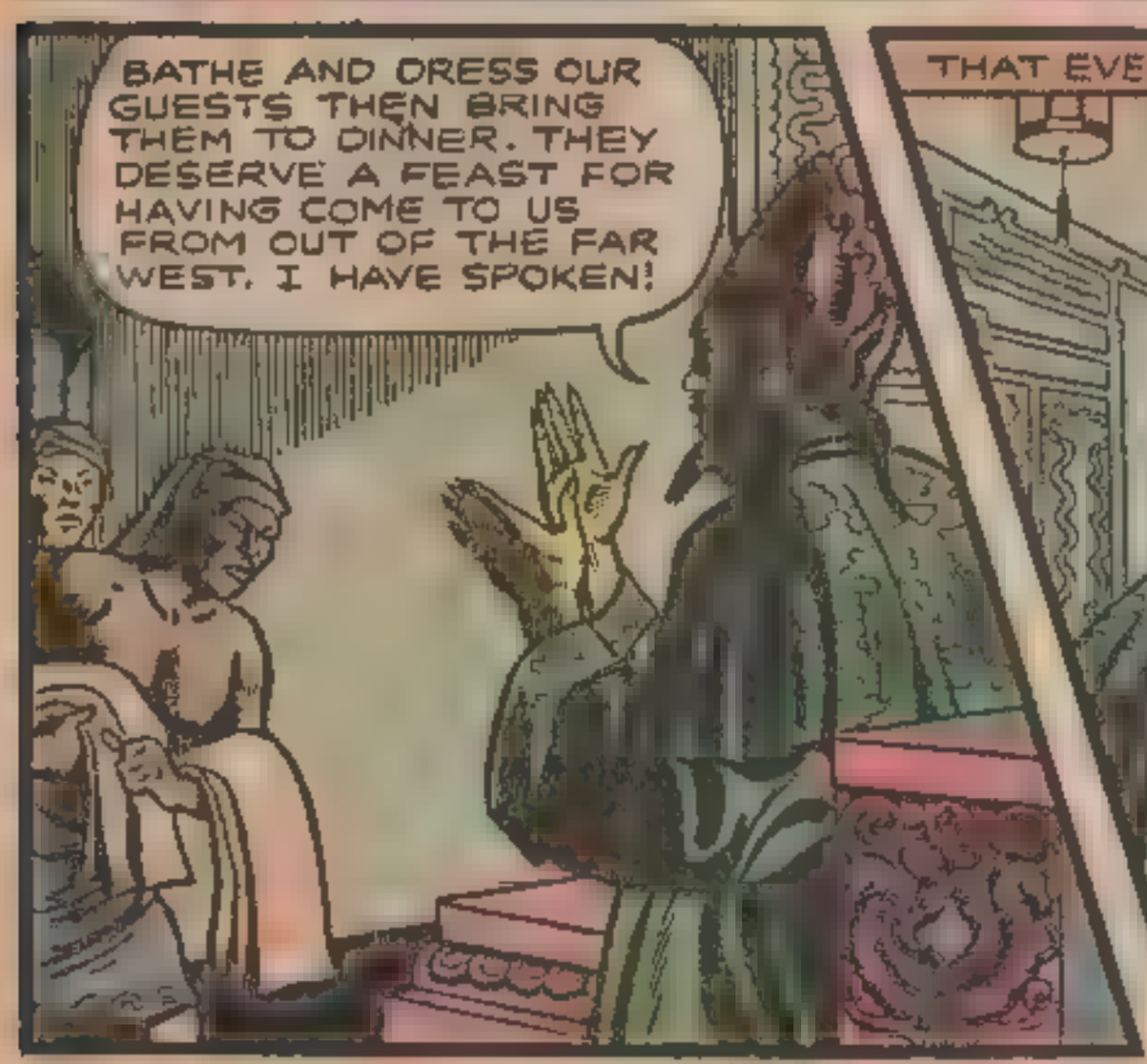
WE HAVE MANY SCOUTS IN THIS GREAT LAND OF OURS, O MARCO POLO.. AND RIDERS TRANSMIT NEWS OF TRAVELERS WITH GREAT SPEED. WE HAVE KNOWN OF YOUR COMING THESE FORTY DAYS!

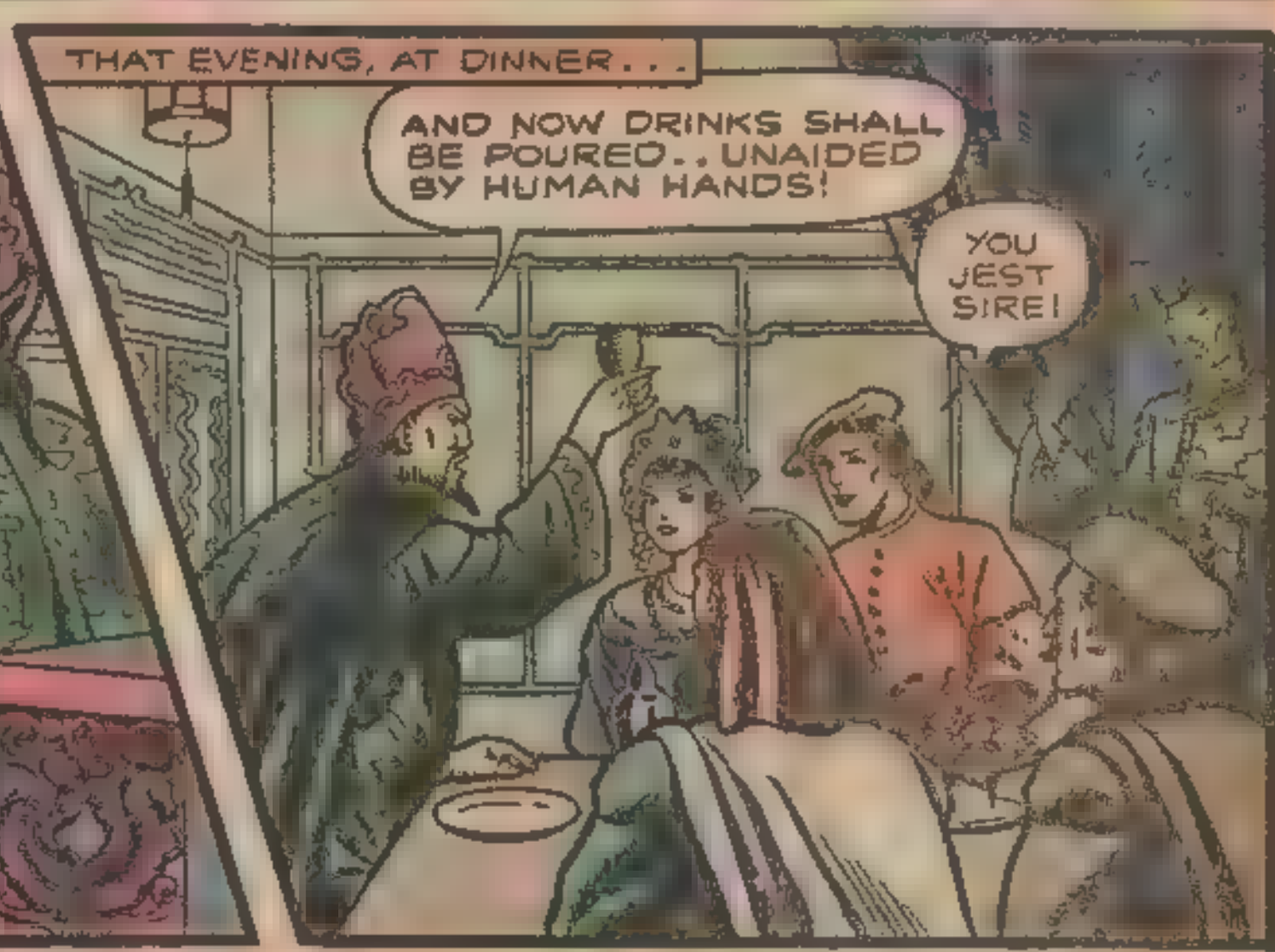
RIDING THROUGH THE ORIENTAL SPLENDOR THAT WAS OLD SHENGTU, MARCO POLO AND HIS FATHER ARE FINALLY USHERED INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE MIGHTY MAJESTIC *KUBLAI KHAN!*

WELCOME, OLD FRIEND, NICOLO.. MY PALACE AND MY KINGDOM ARE AT YOUR DISPOSAL. . .

AND I AM INDEED GLAD TO WELCOME THE SON OF MY OLD FRIEND! YOUNG MARCO, I WOULD HAVE YOU MEET MY DAUGHTER.. THE PRINCESS WHOM WE CALL, SILVER BELLS!

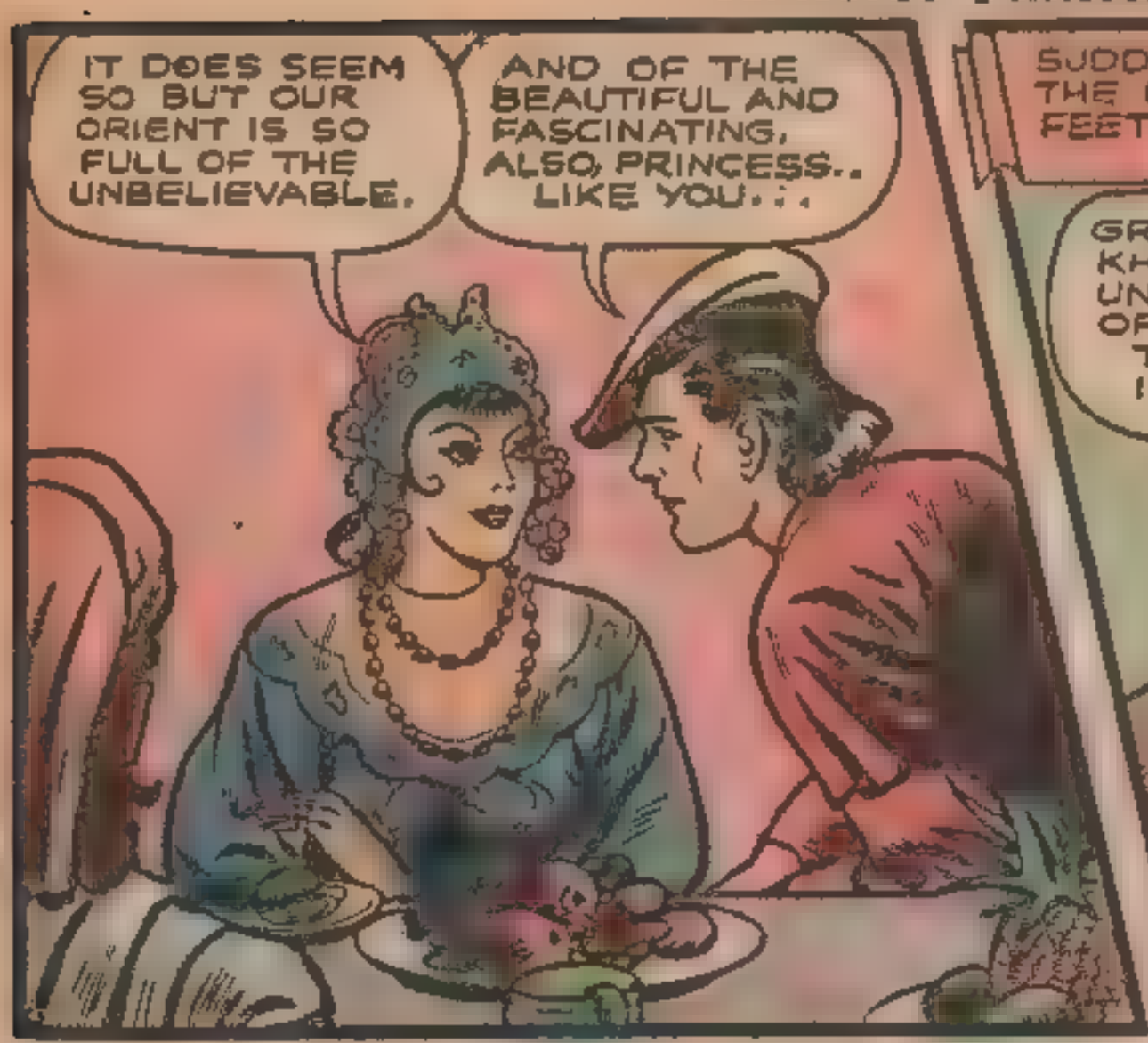

YOU ARE FAR MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN YOUR PICTURE, O PRINCESS! THE JOURNEY THESE THOUSANDS OF MILES HAS BEEN WELL REWARDED!
THANK YOU, MARCO POLO.

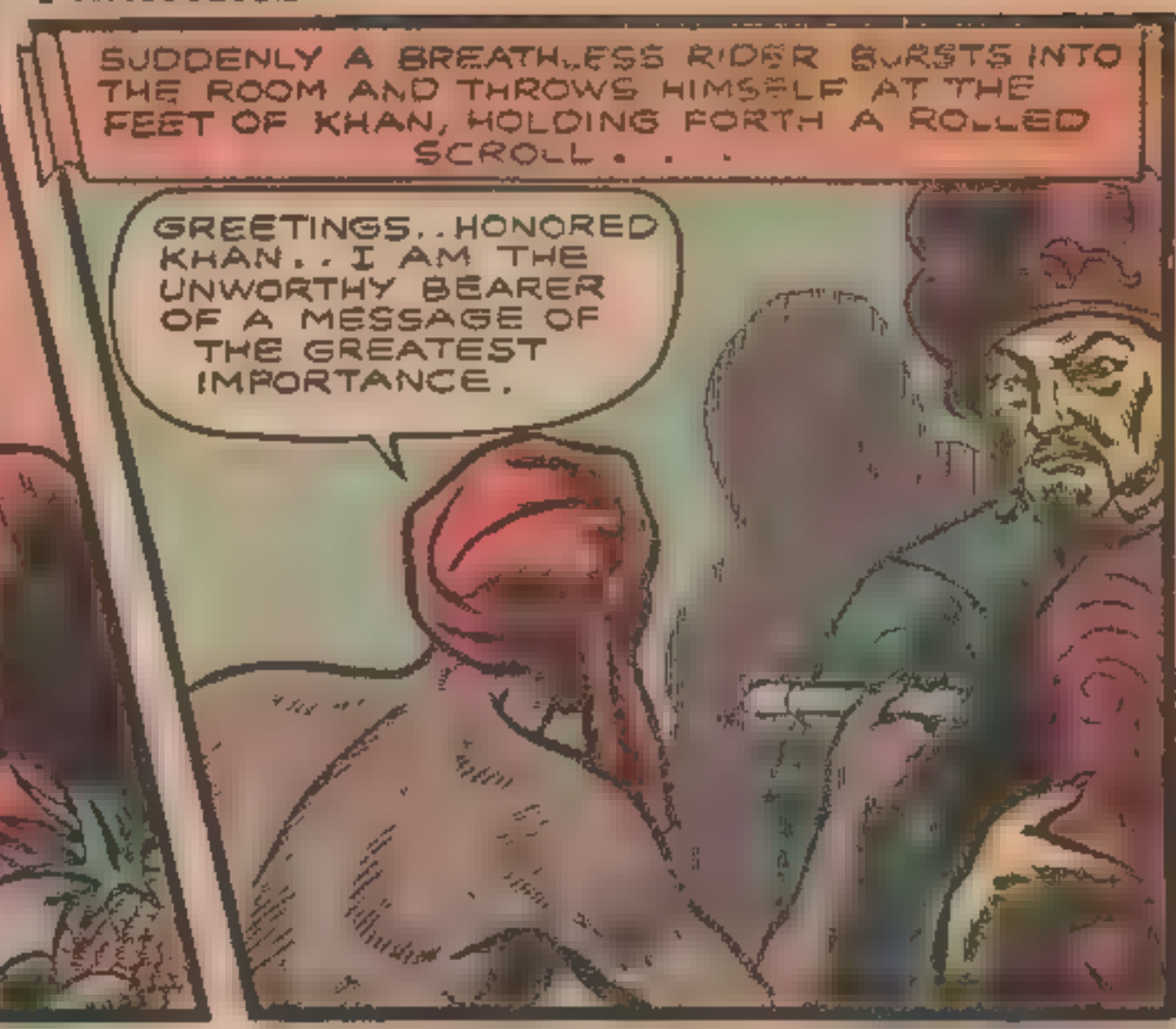

BATHE AND DRESS OUR GUESTS THEN BRING THEM TO DINNER. THEY DESERVE A FEAST FOR HAVING COME TO US FROM OUT OF THE FAR WEST. I HAVE SPOKEN!


THAT EVENING, AT DINNER...
AND NOW DRINKS SHALL BE POURED.. UNAIDED BY HUMAN HANDS!
YOU JEST SIRE!

BUT.....

AND WHEN ALL GLASSES ARE FULL, THE BOTTLE TRAVELS AN EERIE COURSE BACK TO TEBETH, COURT MAGICIAN.
WHY.. IT'S.. IT'S

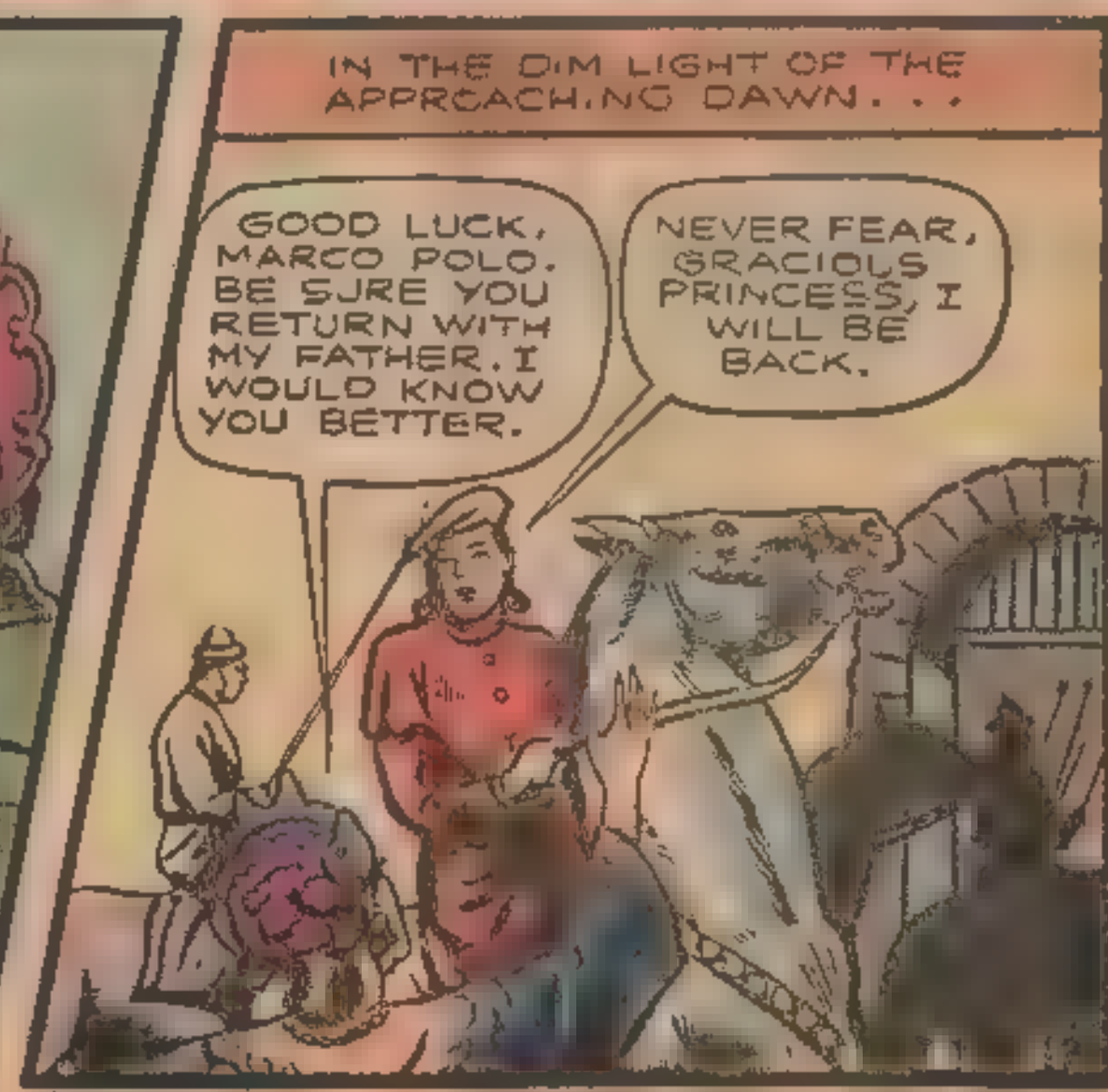

IT DOES SEEM SO BUT OUR ORIENT IS SO FULL OF THE UNBELIEVABLE.
AND OF THE BEAUTIFUL AND FASCINATING, ALSO, PRINCESS.. LIKE YOU...

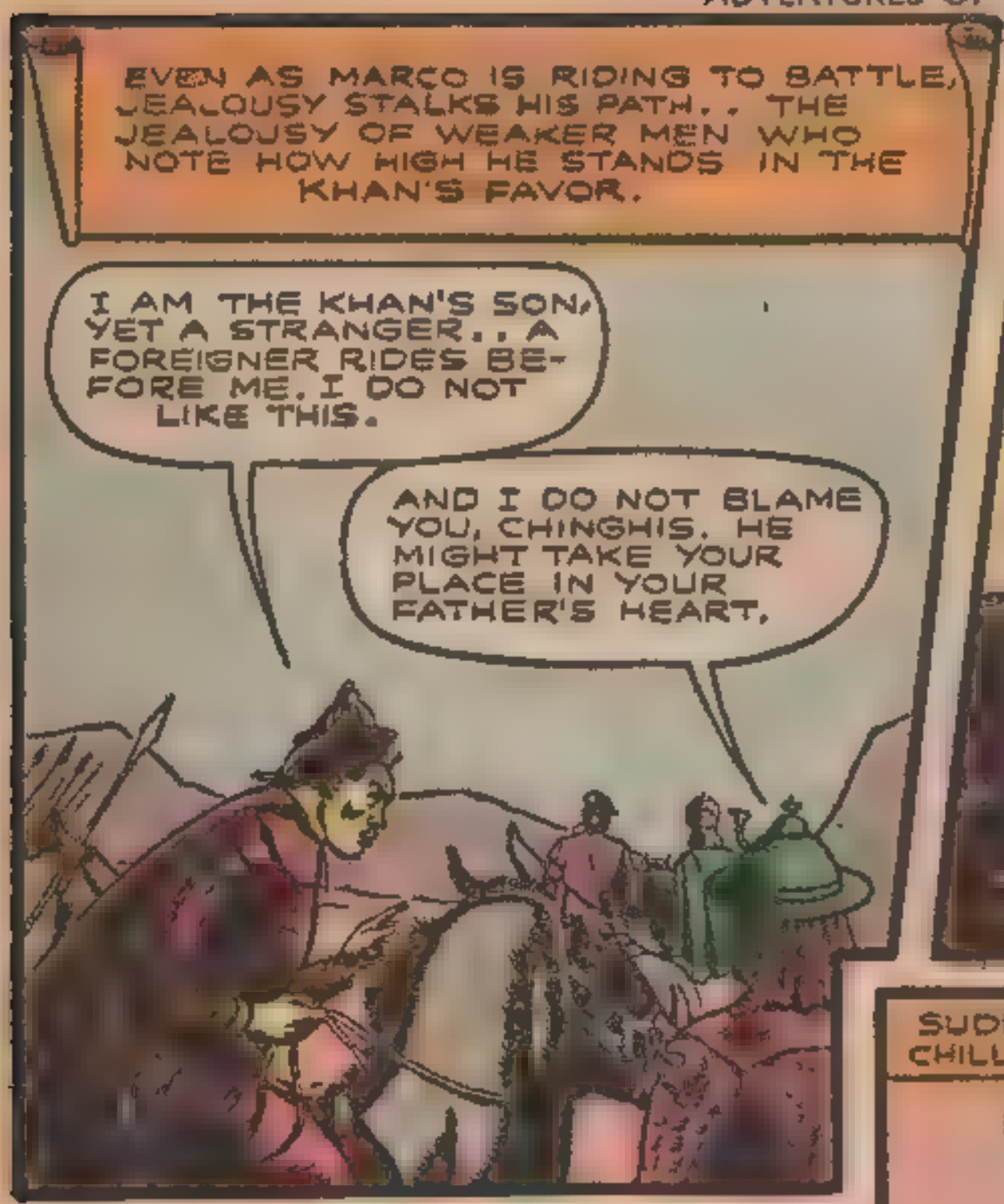

SUDDENLY A BREATHLESS RIDER BURSTS INTO THE ROOM AND THROWS HIMSELF AT THE FEET OF KHAN, HOLDING FORTH A ROLLED SCROLL . . .
GREETINGS..HONORED KHAN..I AM THE UNWORTHY BEARER OF A MESSAGE OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE.

SO! MY ENEMIES TO THE WEST ARE ON THE MOVE AGAIN! THIS TIME THEY HAVE RECRUITED A WILY SCOUNDREL WHO CALLS HIMSELF THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN. I SHALL RIDE WITH MY TROOPS IN THE MORNING.

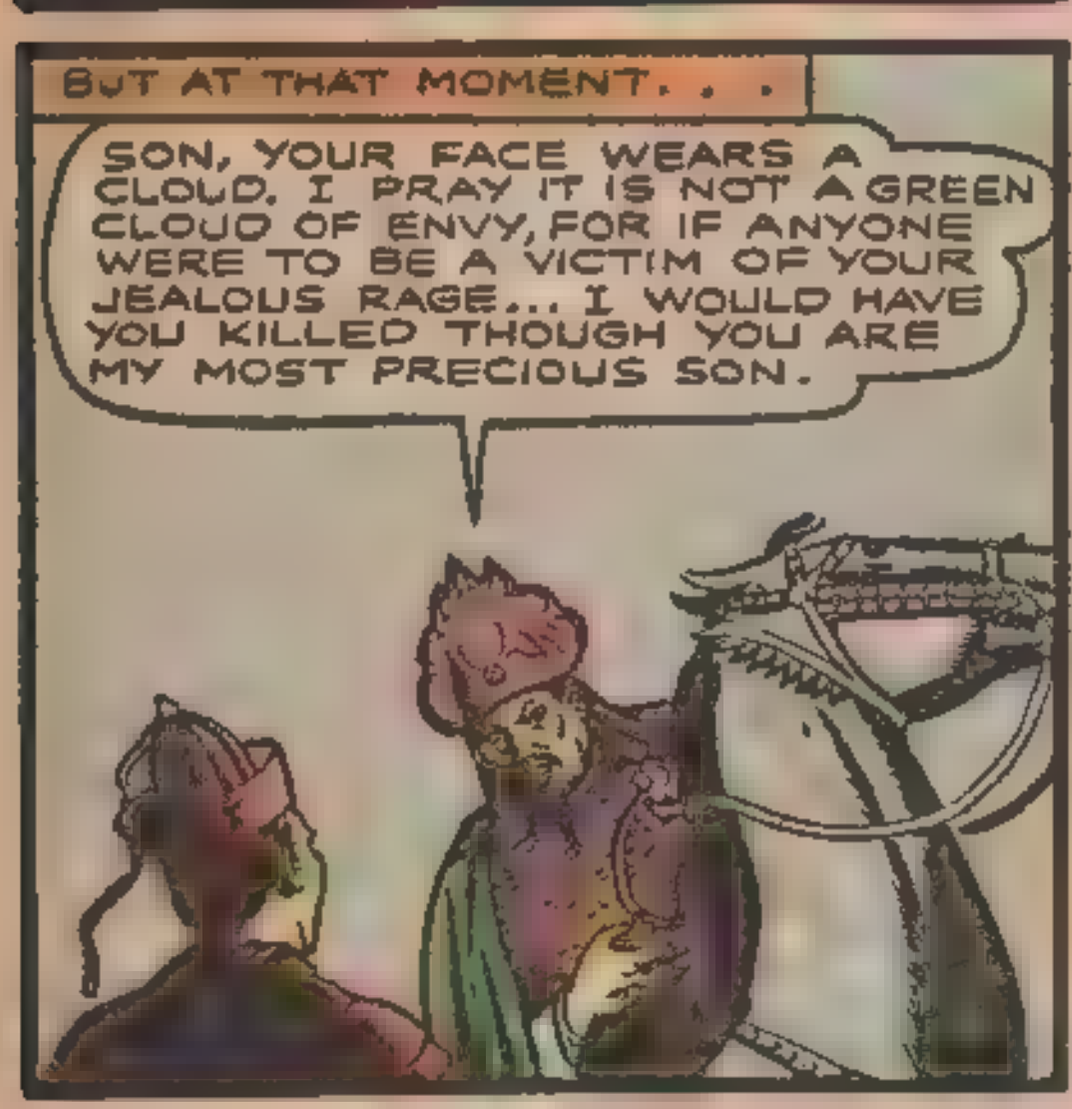
I WOULD GO WITH YOU, O KHAN, TO DO BATTLE AGAINST THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN. WE NARROWLY ESCAPED HIS WILES. I KNOW THE COUNTRY WELL AND COULD SERVE YOU IN GOOD STEAD.

I ADMIRE YOUR COURAGE, MARCO POLO. YOU MAY COME WITH ME.
AH, THIS IS THE KIND OF FINE YOUTH I WOULD HAVE AS MY SON-IN-LAW.


IN THE DIM LIGHT OF THE APPROACHING DAWN. . .
GOOD LUCK, MARCO POLO. BE SURE YOU RETURN WITH MY FATHER. I WOULD KNOW YOU BETTER.
NEVER FEAR, GRACIOUS PRINCESS, I WILL BE BACK.

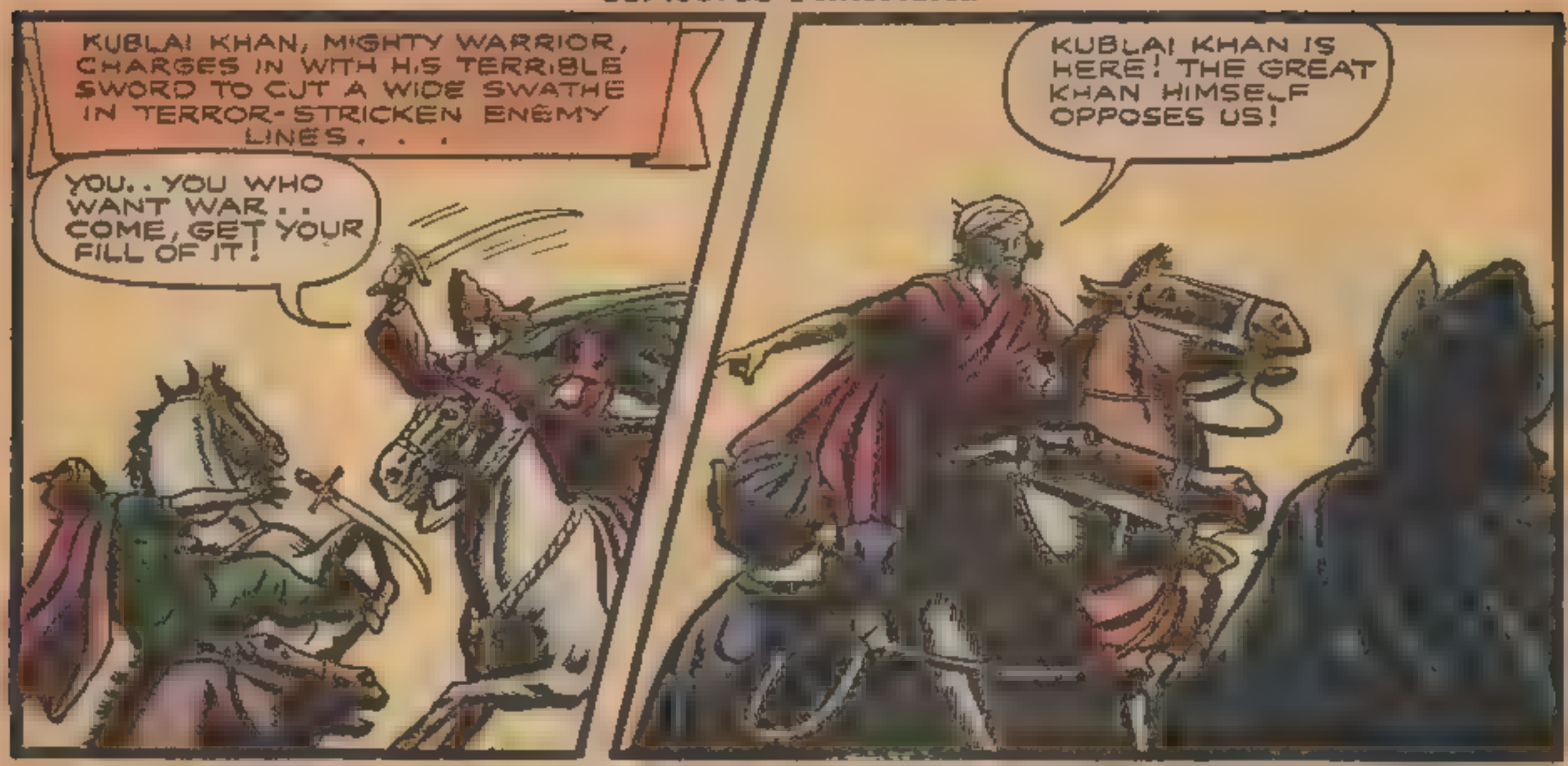

EVEN AS MARCO IS RIDING TO BATTLE, JEALOUSY STALKS HIS PATH.. THE JEALOUSY OF WEAKER MEN WHO NOTE HOW HIGH HE STANDS IN THE KHAN'S FAVOR.
I AM THE KHAN'S SON, YET A STRANGER.. A FOREIGNER RIDES BEFORE ME. I DO NOT LIKE THIS.
AND I DO NOT BLAME YOU, CHINGHIS. HE MIGHT TAKE YOUR PLACE IN YOUR FATHER'S HEART.

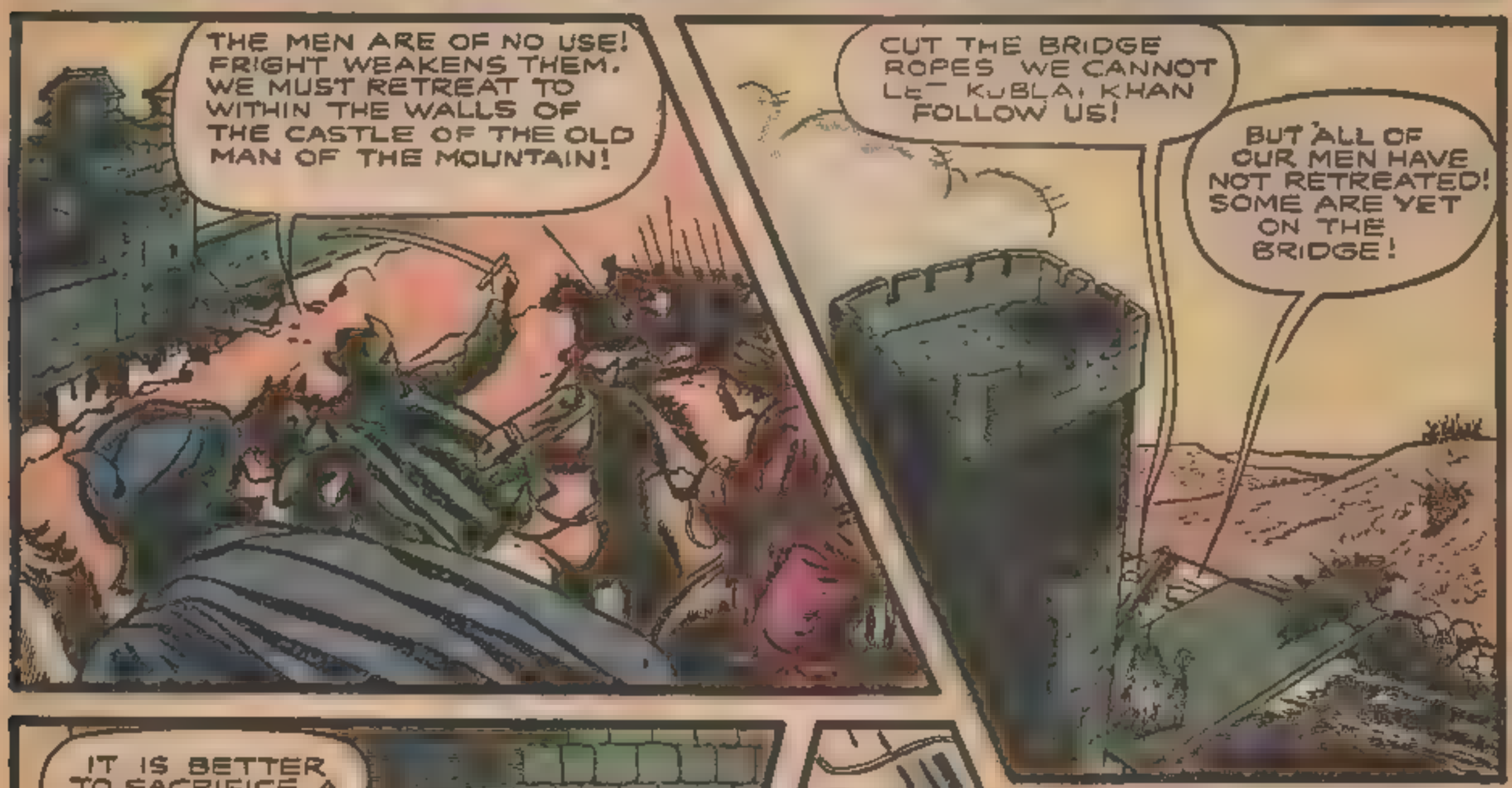
THEN WE MUST GET RID OF HIM. I WILL SEEK A PLAN. YOU DO LIKEWISE, O FRIEND OF MY HAPPY CHILDHOOD.


BUT AT THAT MOMENT. . .
SON, YOUR FACE WEARS A CLOUD. I PRAY IT IS NOT A GREEN CLOUD OF ENVY, FOR IF ANYONE WERE TO BE A VICTIM OF YOUR JEALOUS RAGE... I WOULD HAVE YOU KILLED THOUGH YOU ARE MY MOST PRECIOUS SON.

SUDDENLY... A SCOUT SETS UP THE SPINE-CHILLING CRY... "ENEMY SIGHTED!"
RIDE ON, O WARRIORS OF CATHAY. RIDE TO VICTORY!

IN THE FIRST WAVE OF MOUNTED FIGHTERS, RIDE HAND-PICKED, SKILLFULLY TRAINED ARCHERS... MOBILE MACHINE GUNNERS OF THEIR DAY.

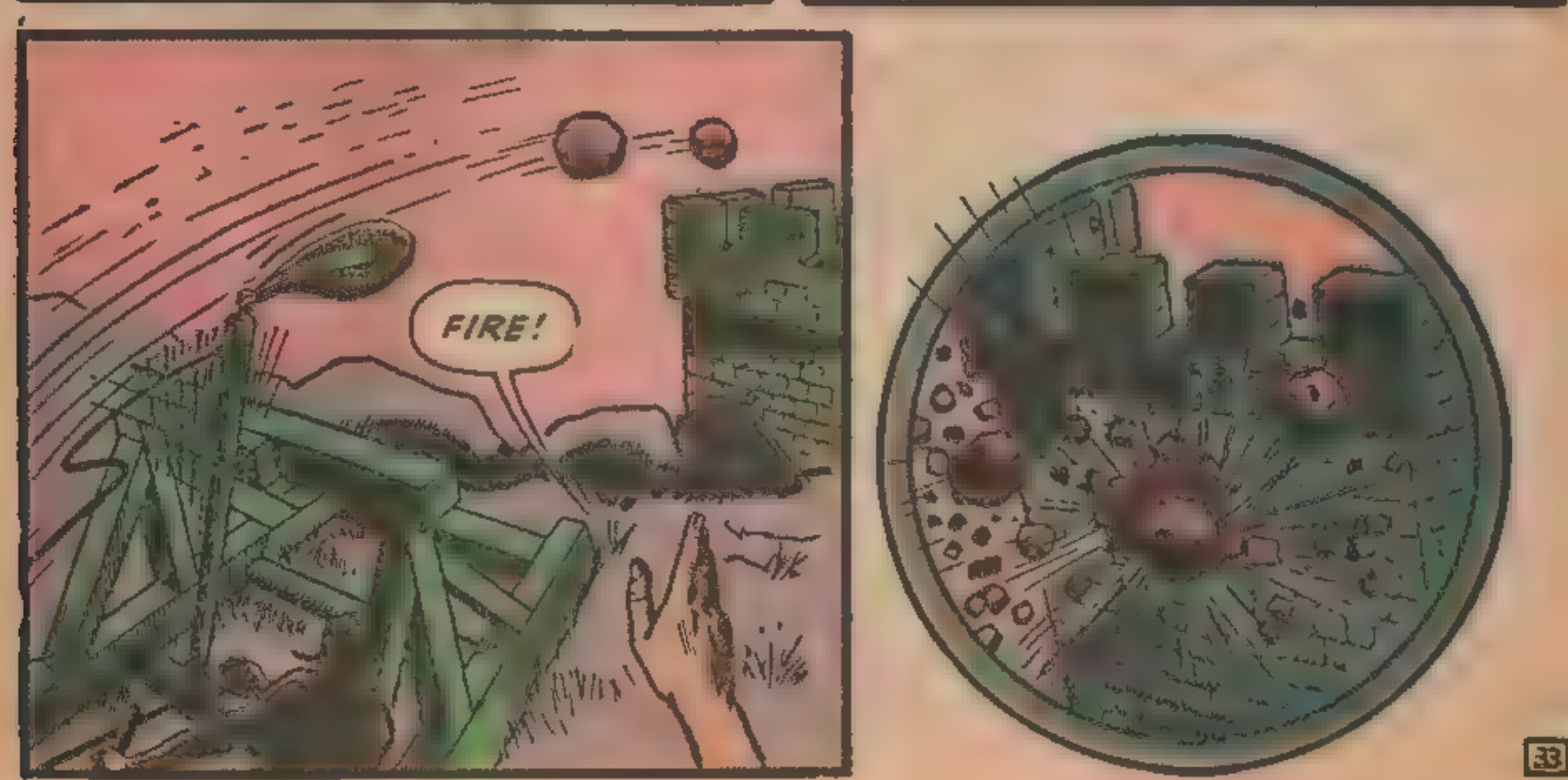

KUBLAI KHAN, MIGHTY WARRIOR, CHARGES IN WITH HIS TERRIBLE SWORD TO CUT A WIDE SWATHE IN TERROR-STRICKEN ENEMY LINES. . .
YOU. . YOU WHO WANT WAR. . COME, GET YOUR FILL OF IT!
KUBLAI KHAN IS HERE! THE GREAT KHAN HIMSELF OPPOSES US!


THE MEN ARE OF NO USE! FRIGHT WEAKENS THEM. WE MUST RETREAT TO WITHIN THE WALLS OF THE CASTLE OF THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN!
CUT THE BRIDGE ROPES WE CANNOT LET KUBLAI KHAN FOLLOW US!
BUT 'ALL OF OUR MEN HAVE NOT RETREATED! SOME ARE YET ON THE BRIDGE!

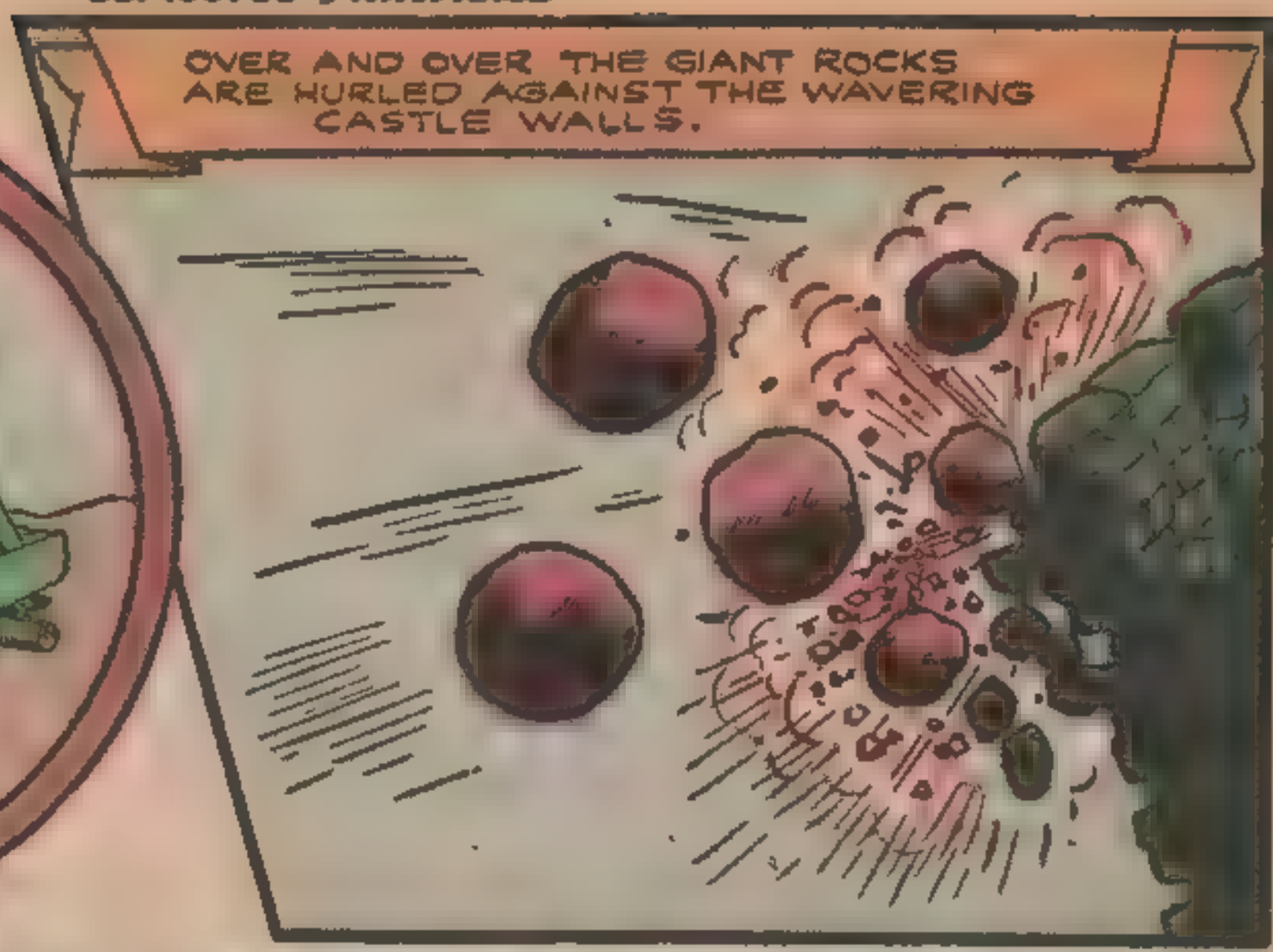
IT IS BETTER TO SACRIFICE A FEW THAN TO LOSE ALL!
HELP!! THE BRIDGE... IT'S CUT!
HELP! OUR HEAVY ARMOR WILL DROWN US!

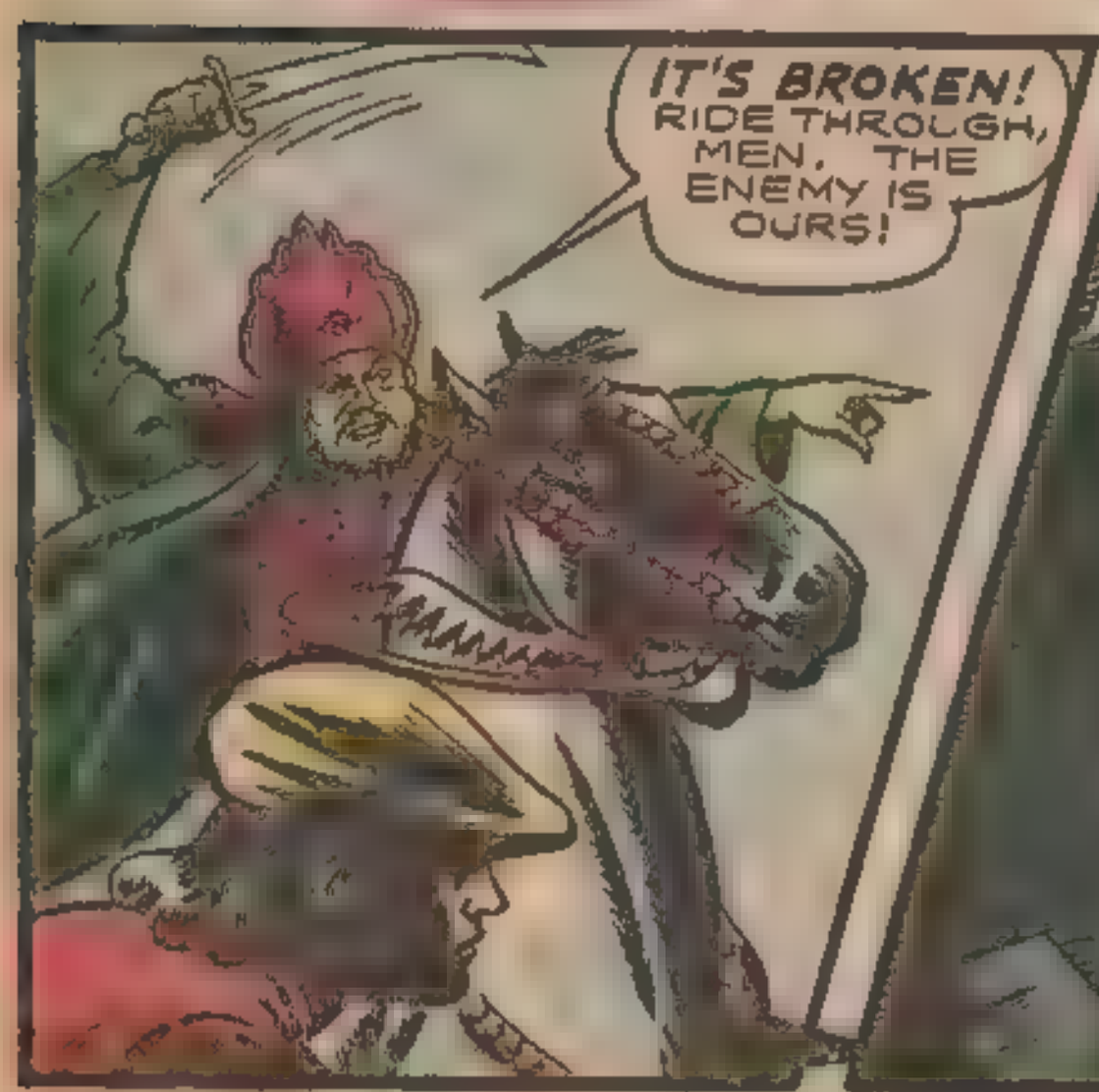
PARDON ME, SIRE, BUT MIGHT I MAKE A SUGGESTION? I KNOW THIS CASTLE. IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN RIDERS ALONE TO SEIZE IT.
WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST, BOY?
HAVE SOME OF YOUR MEN REBUILD THE BRIDGE.. LET ME HAVE A GROUP OF MEN TO HELP ME BUILD A WEAPON WHICH I BELIEVE WILL DESTROY THE CASTLE WALLS.
IT SHALL BE AS YOU SAY, MARCO. SOMETIMES THE NOVICE HAS LESSONS FOR THE EXPERT.

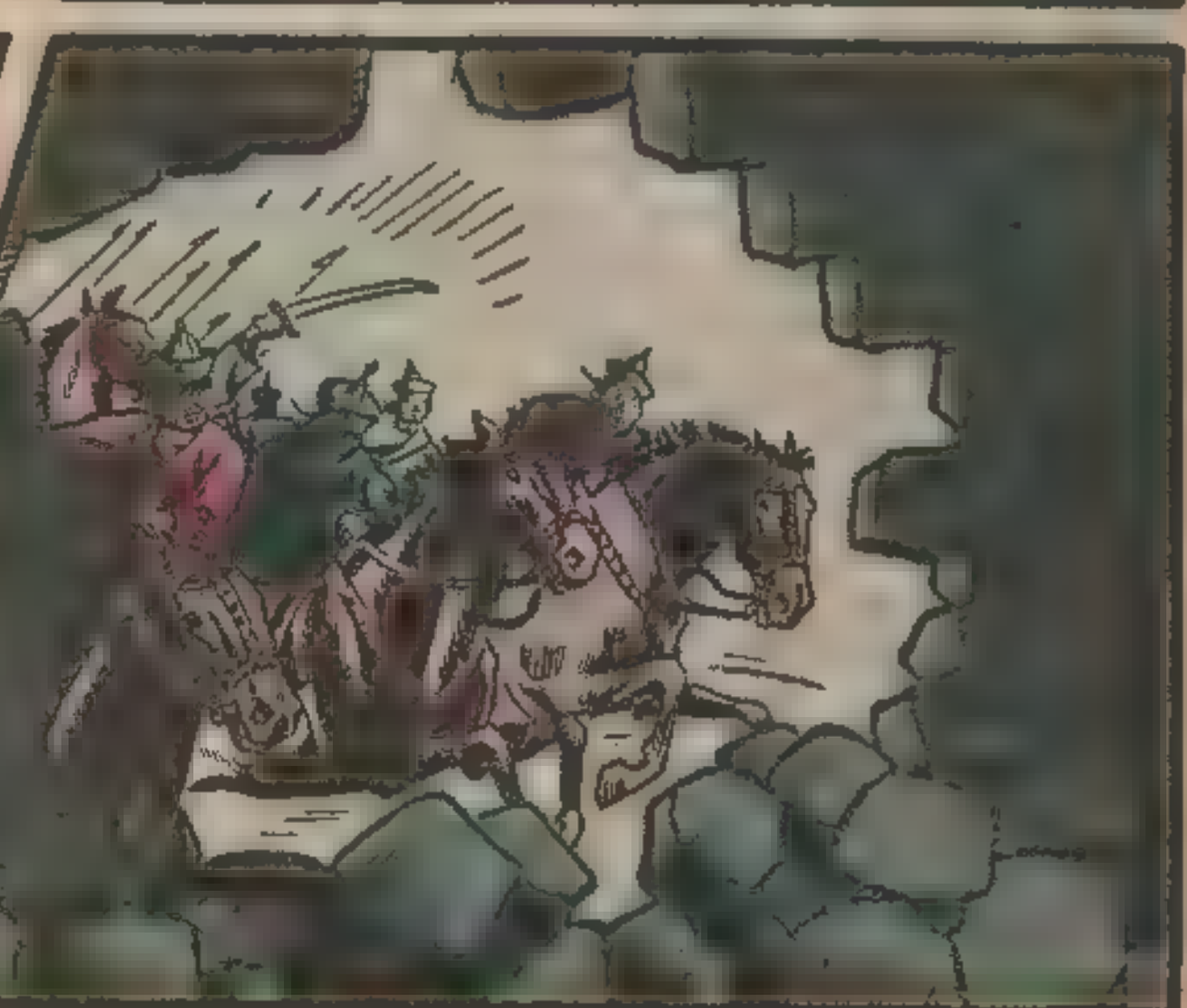
GOOD WORK, MEN. THE CATAPULT IS ALMOST FINISHED.
FINALLY THE BRIDGE IS BUILT AND THE HUGE CATAPULT IS DRAGGED BEFORE THE WALLS..THEN..
FASTEN THOSE STONES WELL! NOW. . .

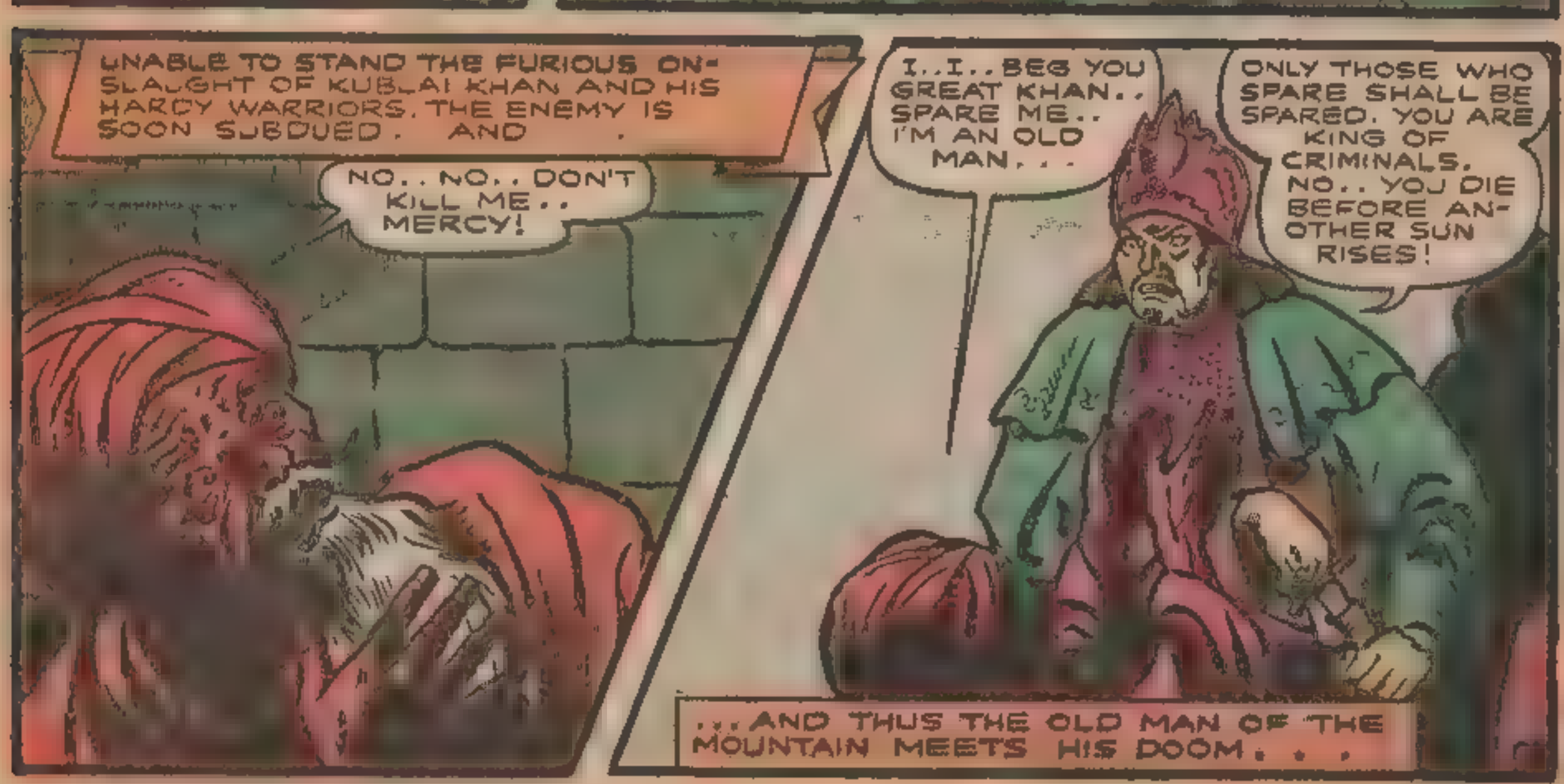

FIRE!

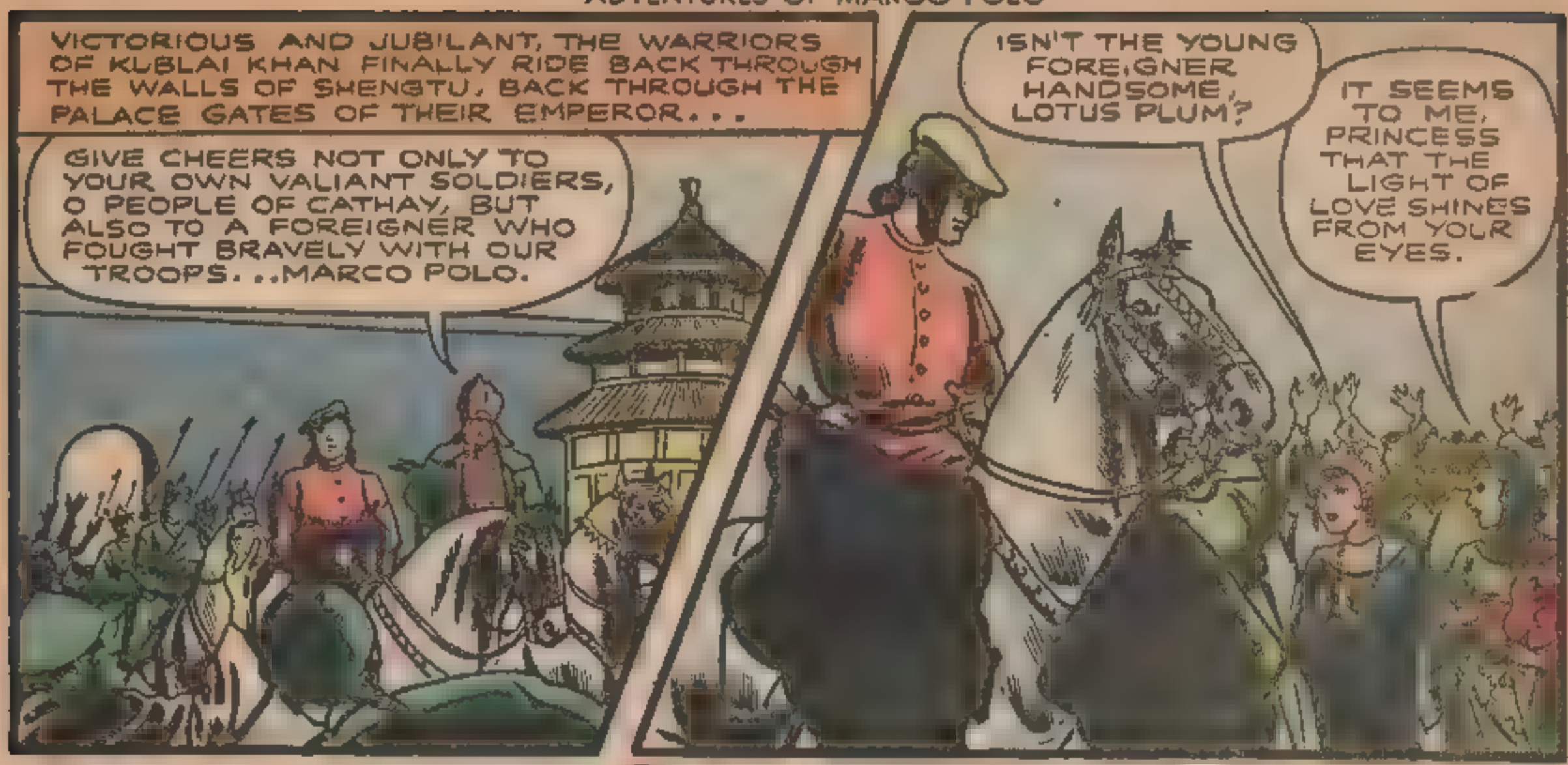
HERE IS THE CATAPULT MARCO POLO BUILT...

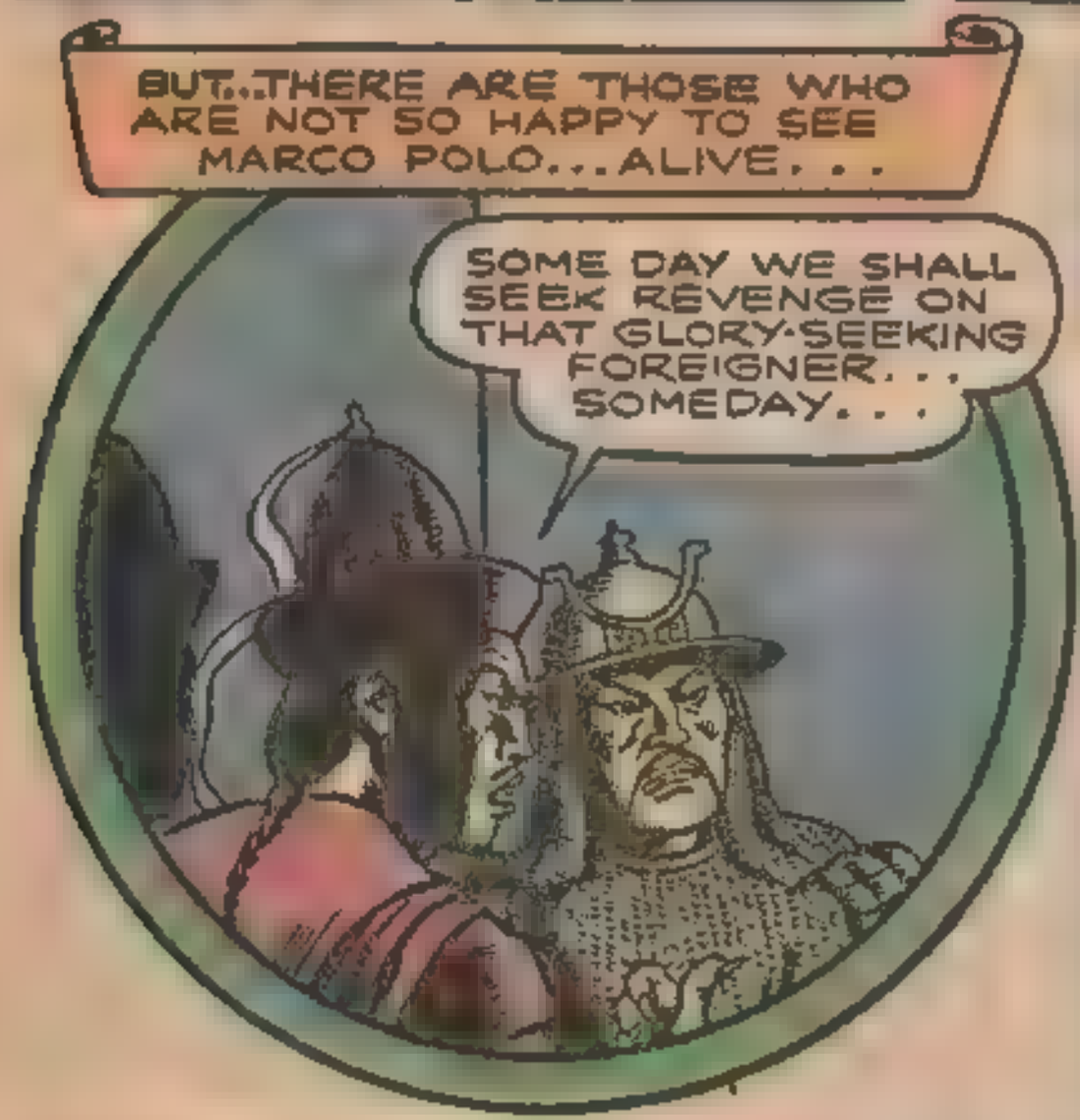

OVER AND OVER THE GIANT ROCKS ARE HURLED AGAINST THE WAVERING CASTLE WALLS.


IT'S BROKEN! RIDE THROUGH, MEN. THE ENEMY IS OURS!

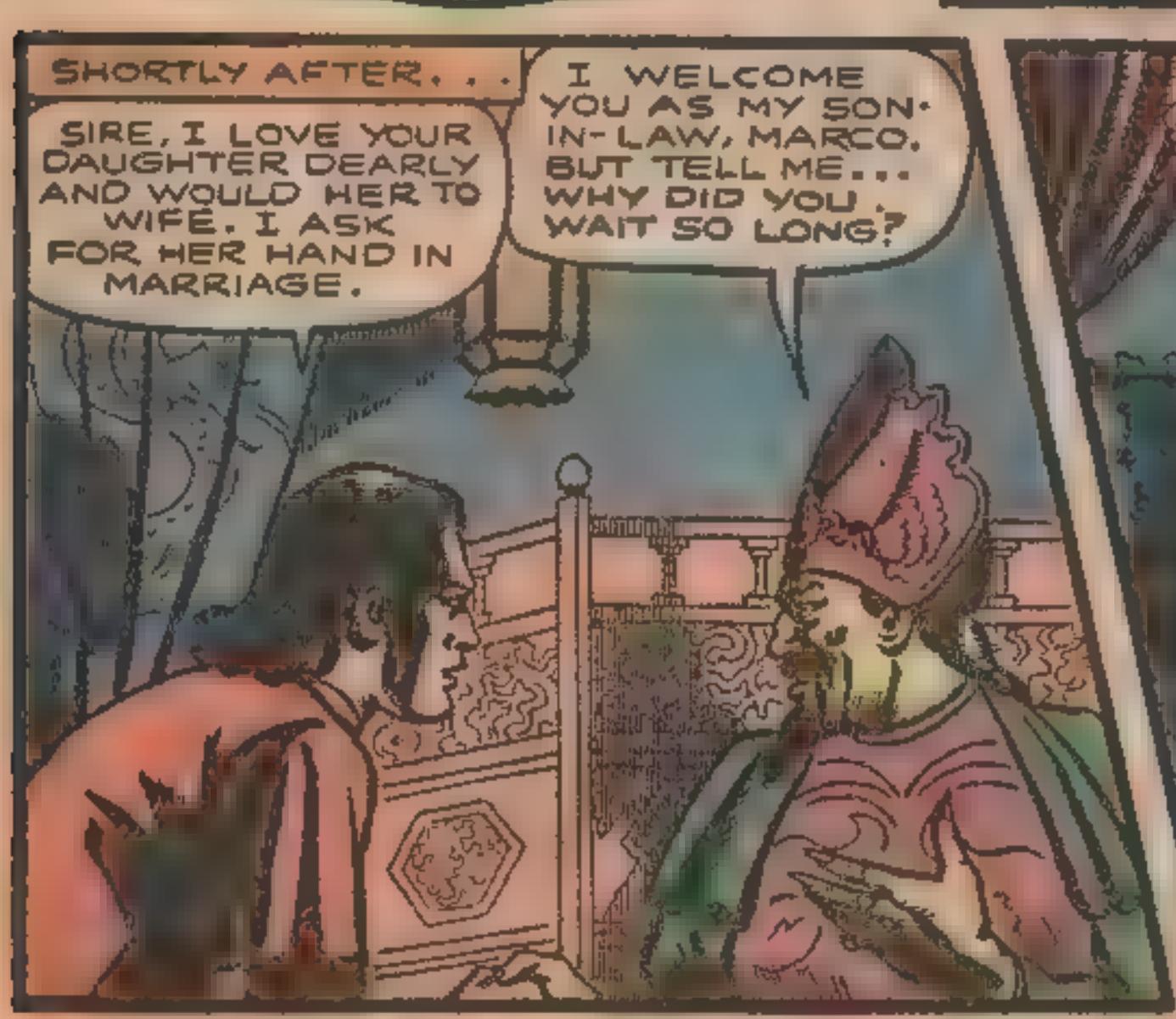



UNABLE TO STAND THE FURIOUS ON-SLAUGHT OF KUBLAI KHAN AND HIS HARDY WARRIORS, THE ENEMY IS SOON SUBDUED. AND
NO.. NO.. DON'T KILL ME.. MERCY!
I..I..BEG YOU GREAT KHAN.. SPARE ME.. I'M AN OLD MAN...
ONLY THOSE WHO SPARE SHALL BE SPARED. YOU ARE KING OF CRIMINALS. NO.. YOU DIE BEFORE ANOTHER SUN RISES!
...AND THUS THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN MEETS HIS DOOM...

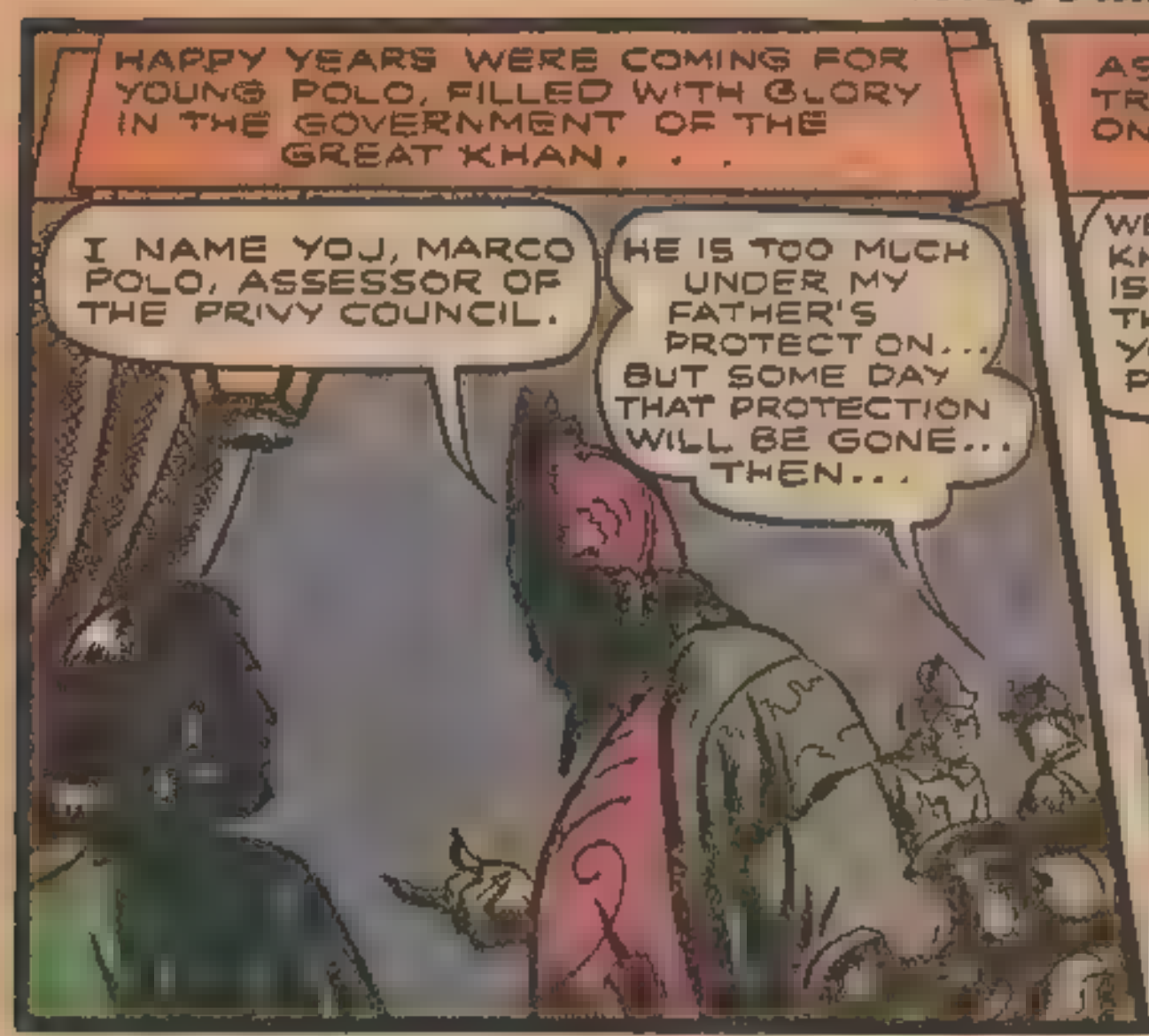

VICTORIOUS AND JUBILANT, THE WARRIORS OF KUBLAI KHAN FINALLY RIDE BACK THROUGH THE WALLS OF SHENGTU, BACK THROUGH THE PALACE GATES OF THEIR EMPEROR...
GIVE CHEERS NOT ONLY TO YOUR OWN VALIANT SOLDIERS, O PEOPLE OF CATHAY, BUT ALSO TO A FOREIGNER WHO FOUGHT BRAVELY WITH OUR TROOPS...MARCO POLO.
ISN'T THE YOUNG FOREIGNER HANDSOME, LOTUS PLUM?
IT SEEMS TO ME, PRINCESS THAT THE LIGHT OF LOVE SHINES FROM YOUR EYES.

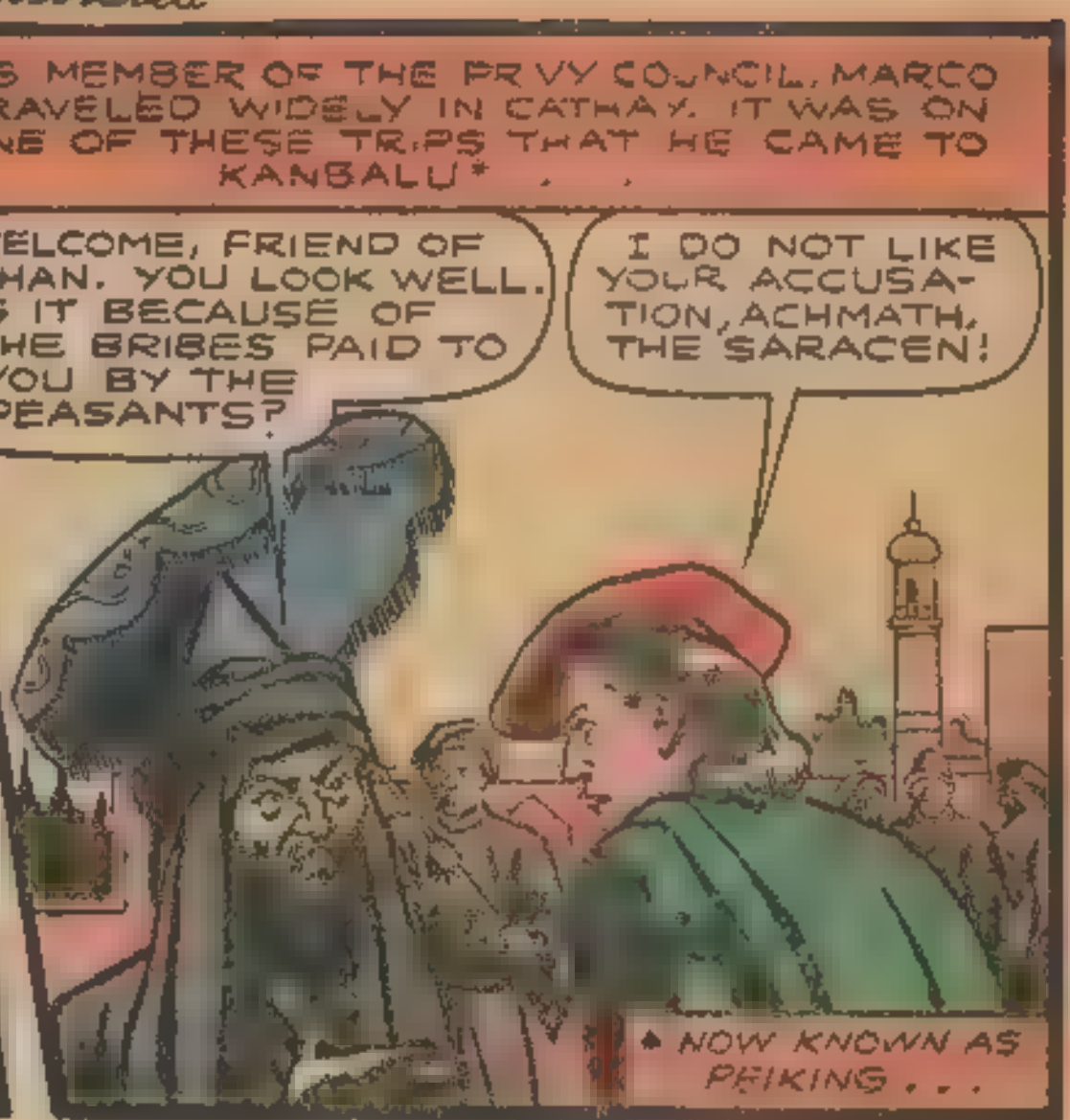

BUT...THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE NOT SO HAPPY TO SEE MARCO POLO...ALIVE...
SOME DAY WE SHALL SEEK REVENGE ON THAT GLORY-SEEKING FOREIGNER... SOMEDAY...

LATER, THE VICTORY BANQUET AND MARCO MEETS PRINCESS SILVER BELLS AGAIN...
WELCOME BACK, MARCO POLO. I THOUGHT MUCH OF YOU...I AM HAPPY YOU RETURNED... SAFE.
THANK YOU, KIND PRINCESS.. YOU HAVE GROWN MORE BEAUTIFUL IT SEEMS...

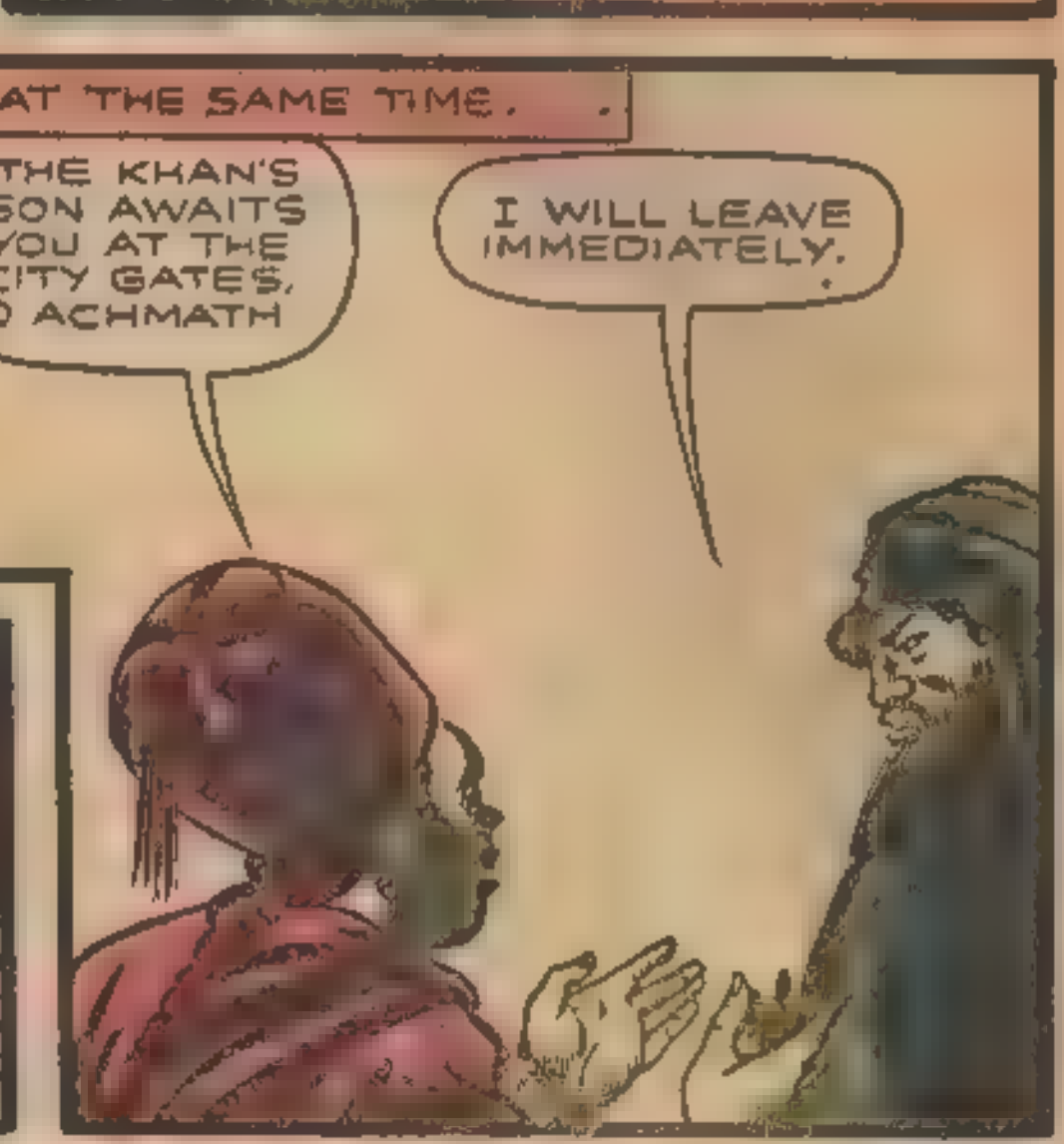

SHORTLY AFTER...
SIRE, I LOVE YOUR DAUGHTER DEARLY AND WOULD HER TO WIFE. I ASK FOR HER HAND IN MARRIAGE.
I WELCOME YOU AS MY SON-IN-LAW, MARCO. BUT TELL ME... WHY DID YOU WAIT SO LONG?

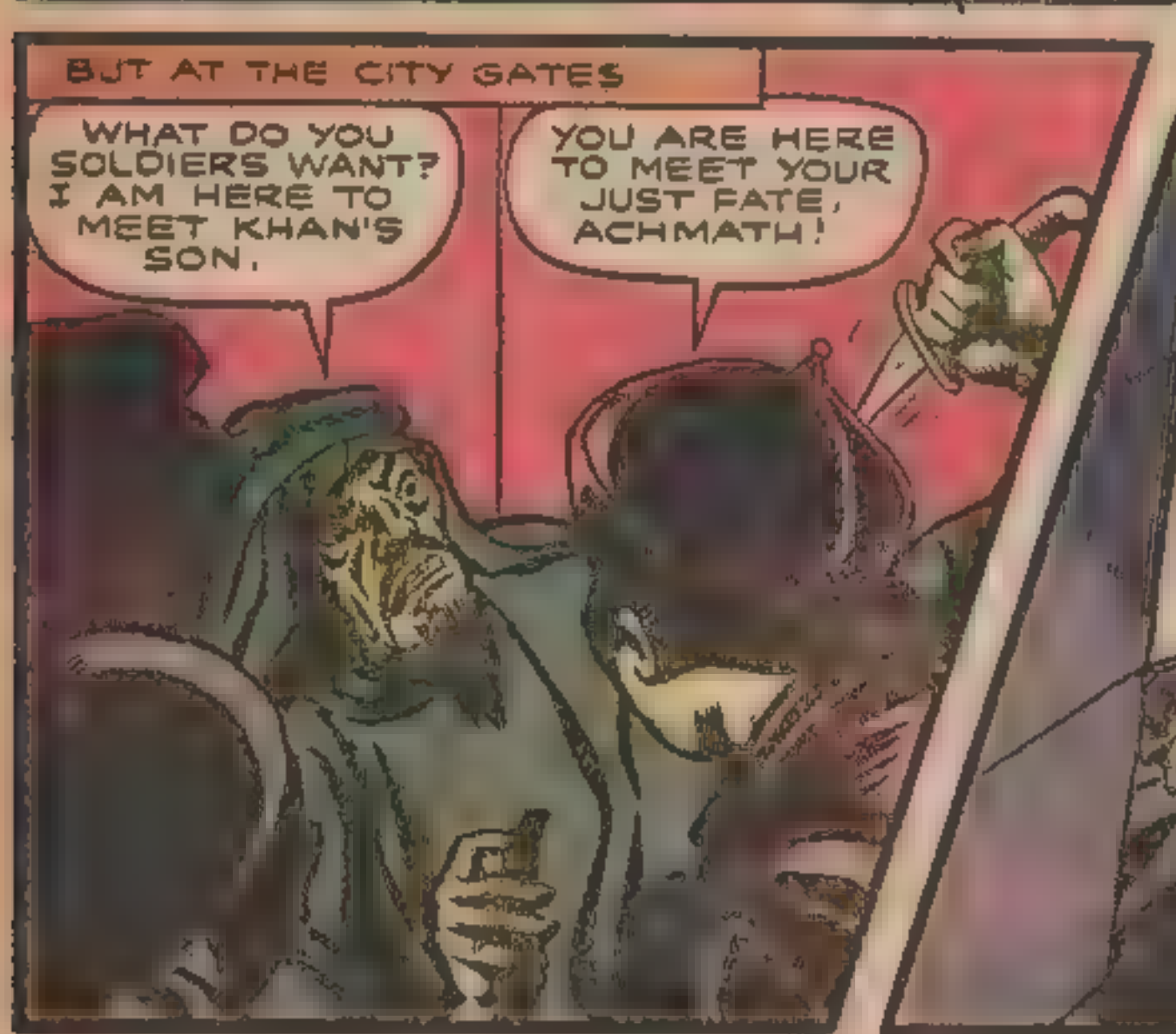
I PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE. MAY YOU KNOW ONLY HAPPINESS.

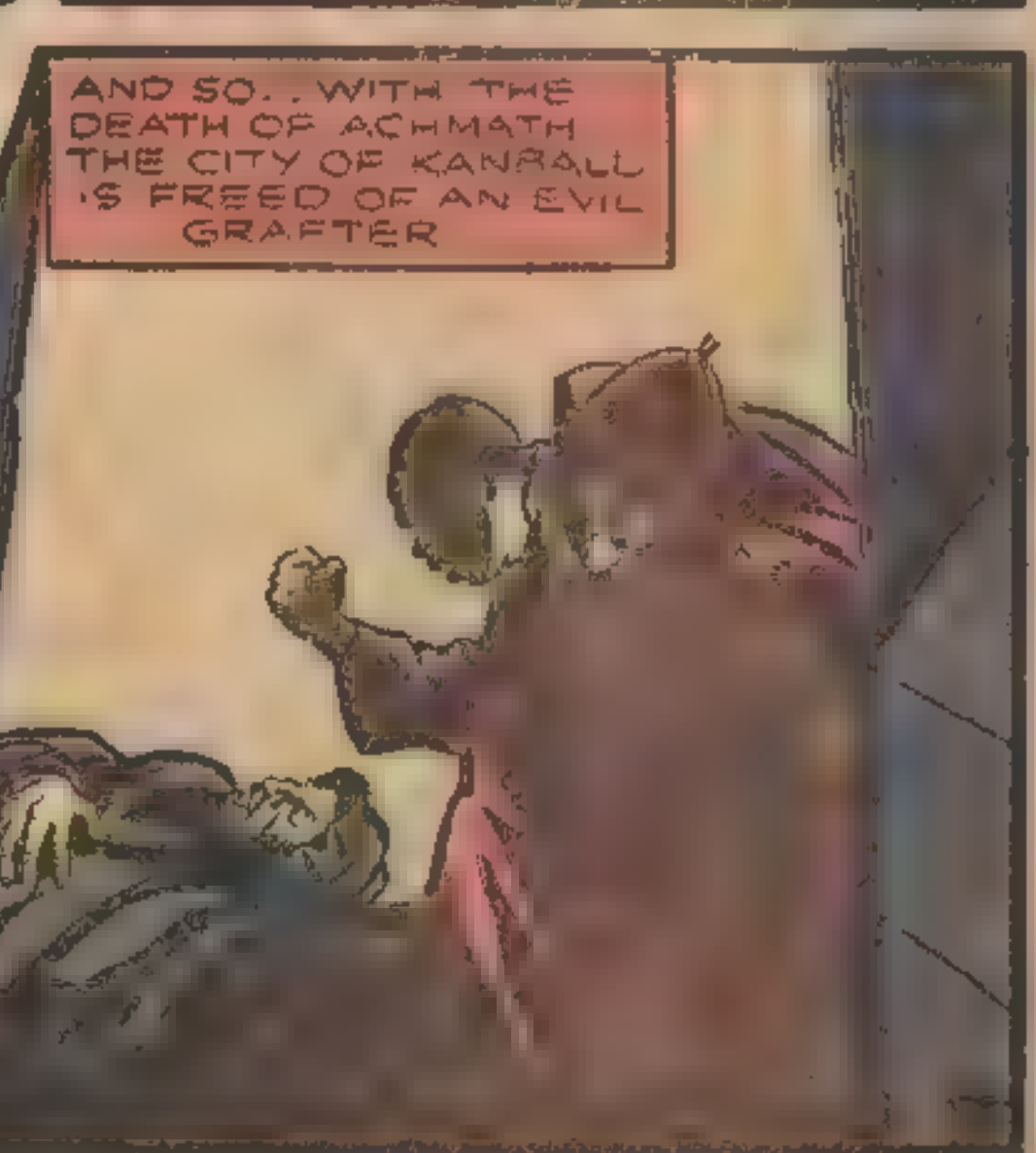

HAPPY YEARS WERE COMING FOR YOUNG POLO, FILLED WITH GLORY IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GREAT KHAN. . .
I NAME YOU, MARCO POLO, ASSESSOR OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL.
HE IS TOO MUCH UNDER MY FATHER'S PROTECTION... BUT SOME DAY THAT PROTECTION WILL BE GONE... THEN...


AS MEMBER OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL, MARCO TRAVELED WIDELY IN CATHAY. IT WAS ON ONE OF THESE TRIPS THAT HE CAME TO KANBALU* . . .
WELCOME, FRIEND OF KHAN. YOU LOOK WELL. IS IT BECAUSE OF THE BRIBES PAID TO YOU BY THE PEASANTS?
I DO NOT LIKE YOUR ACCUSATION, ACHMATH, THE SARACEN!
* NOW KNOWN AS PEIKING . . .

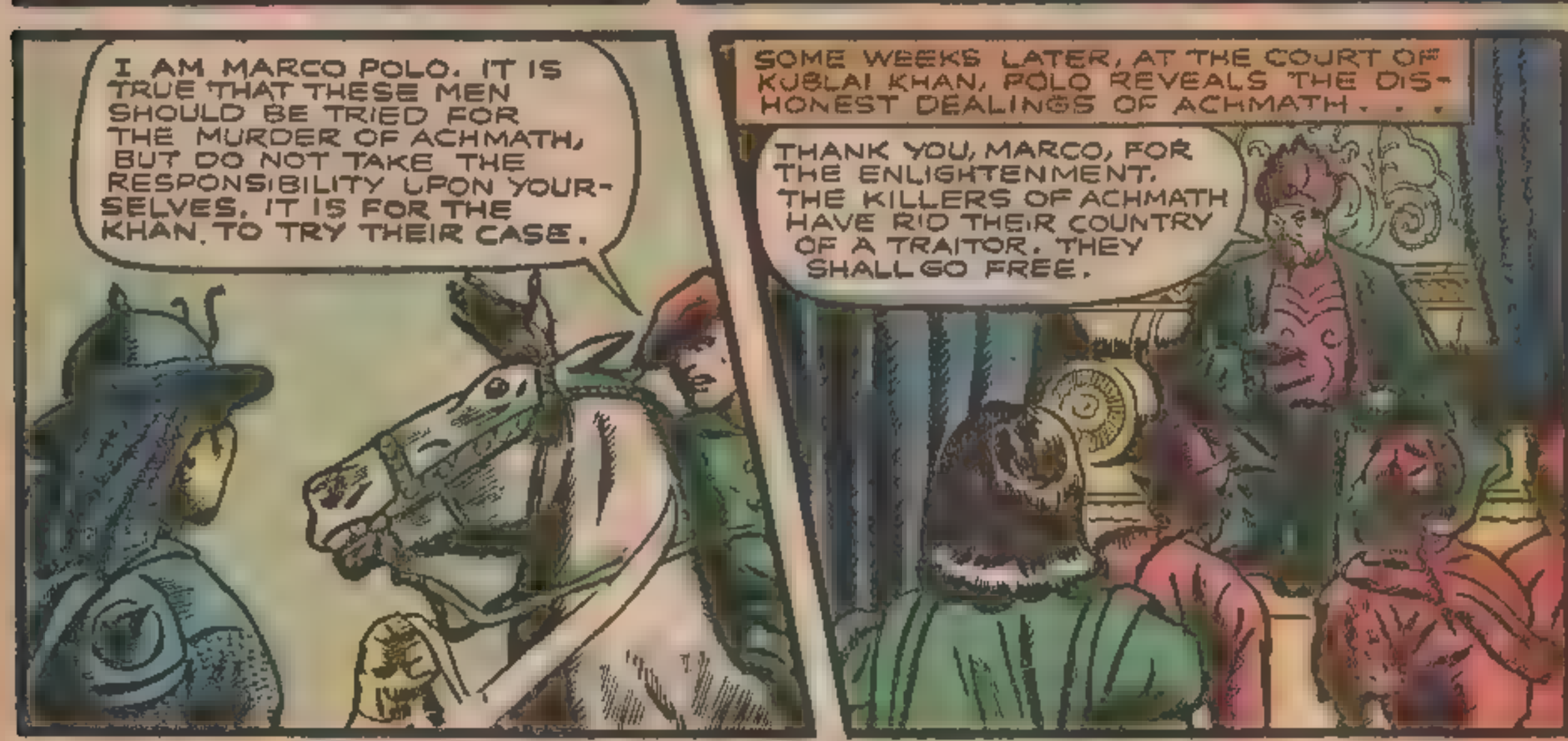
THAT NIGHT, MARCO MINGLES WITH THE PEOPLE IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE.
THE GRAFTING MUST END!
IT IS THE LIFE OF THE GRAFTER THAT WILL END

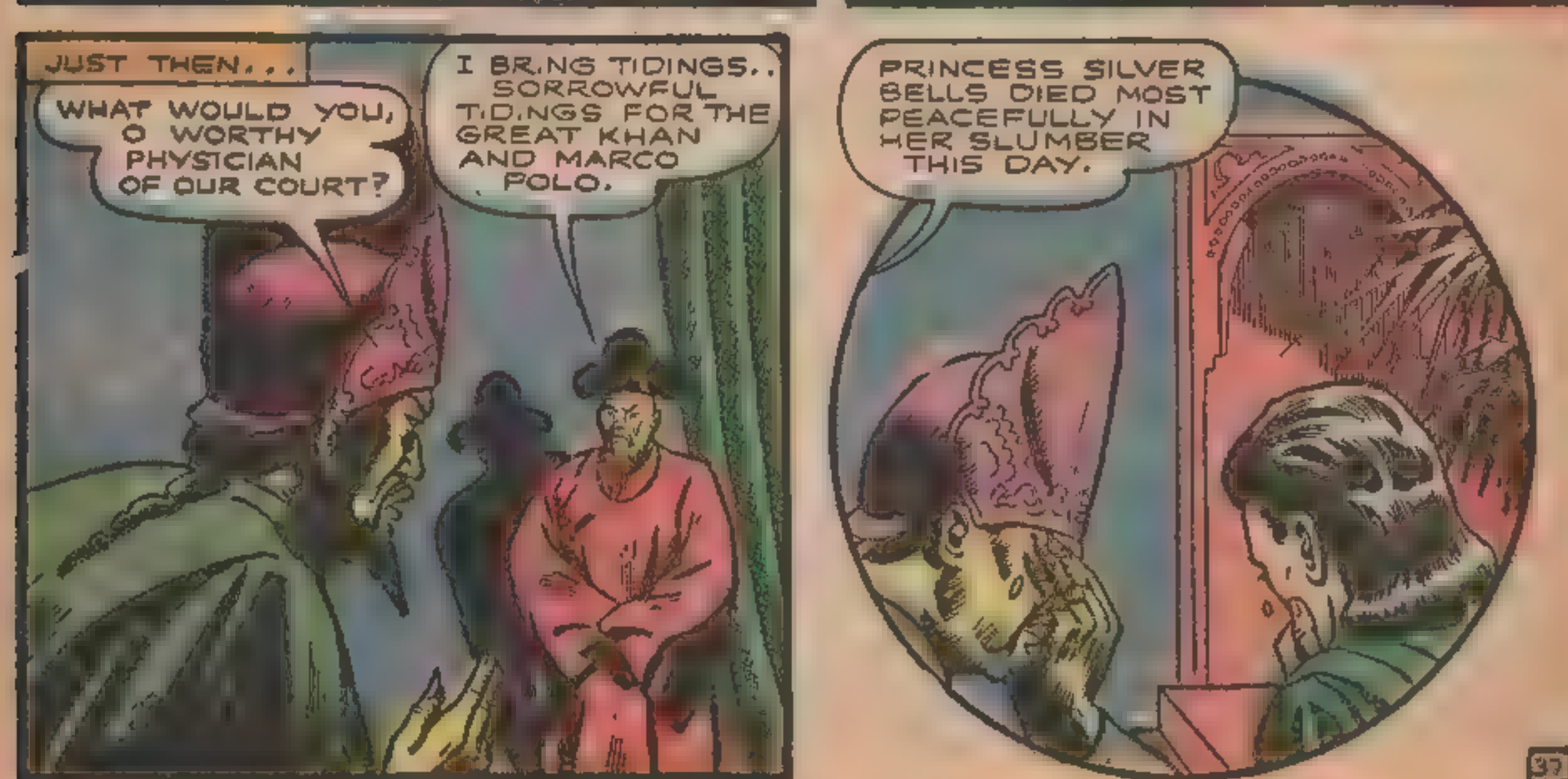

. AT THE SAME TIME. .
THE KHAN'S SON AWAITS YOU AT THE CITY GATES, O ACHMATH
I WILL LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.

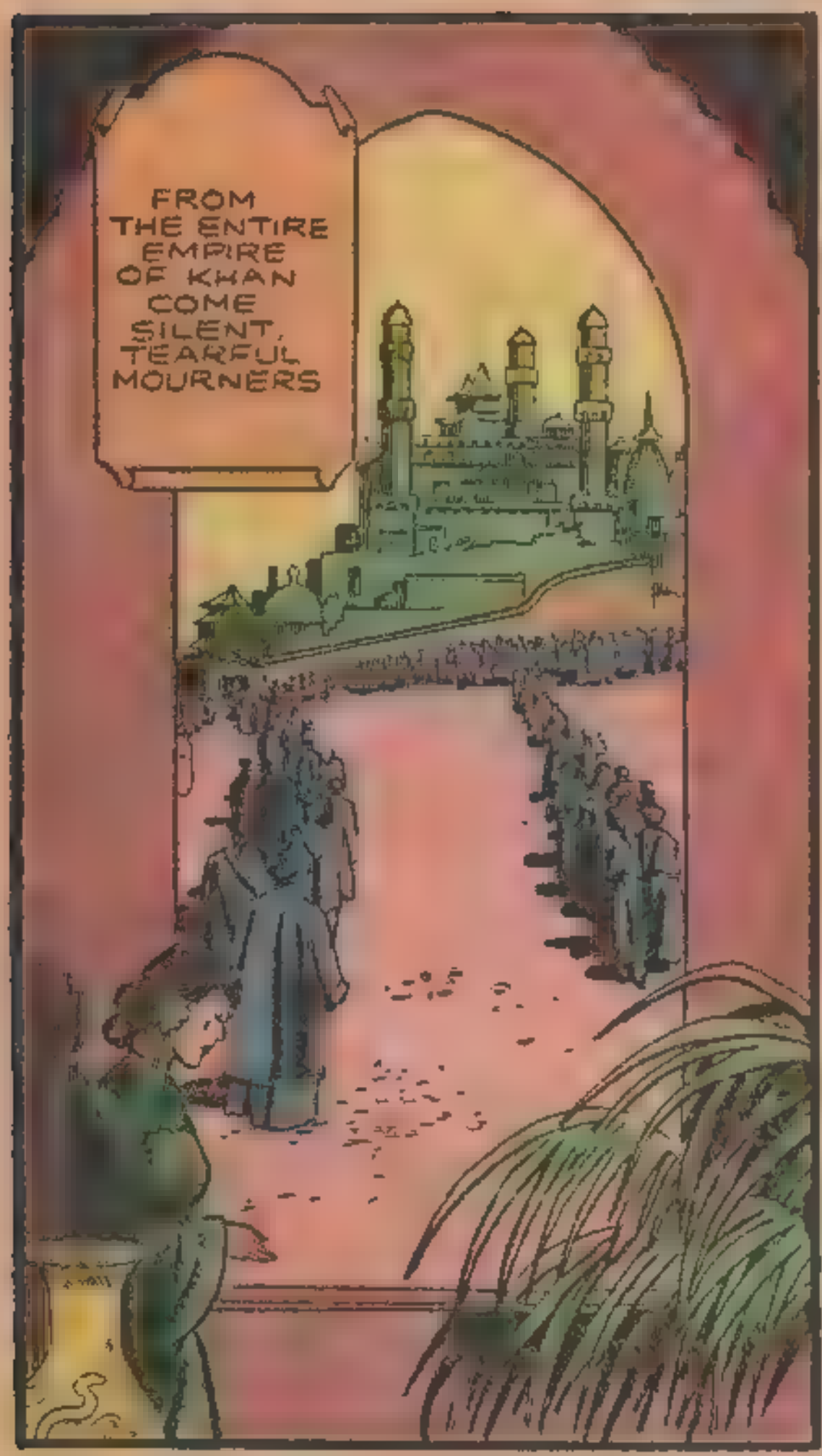

BUT AT THE CITY GATES
WHAT DO YOU SOLDIERS WANT? I AM HERE TO MEET KHAN'S SON.
YOU ARE HERE TO MEET YOUR JUST FATE, ACHMATH!


AND SO. . WITH THE DEATH OF ACHMATH THE CITY OF KANBALU IS FREED OF AN EVIL GRAFTER

BUT AT THAT MOMENT. . .
KUBLAI KHAN'S TROOPS ARRIVE!
THEY ARE MURDERERS. KILL THEM ON THE SPOT!
WAIT!

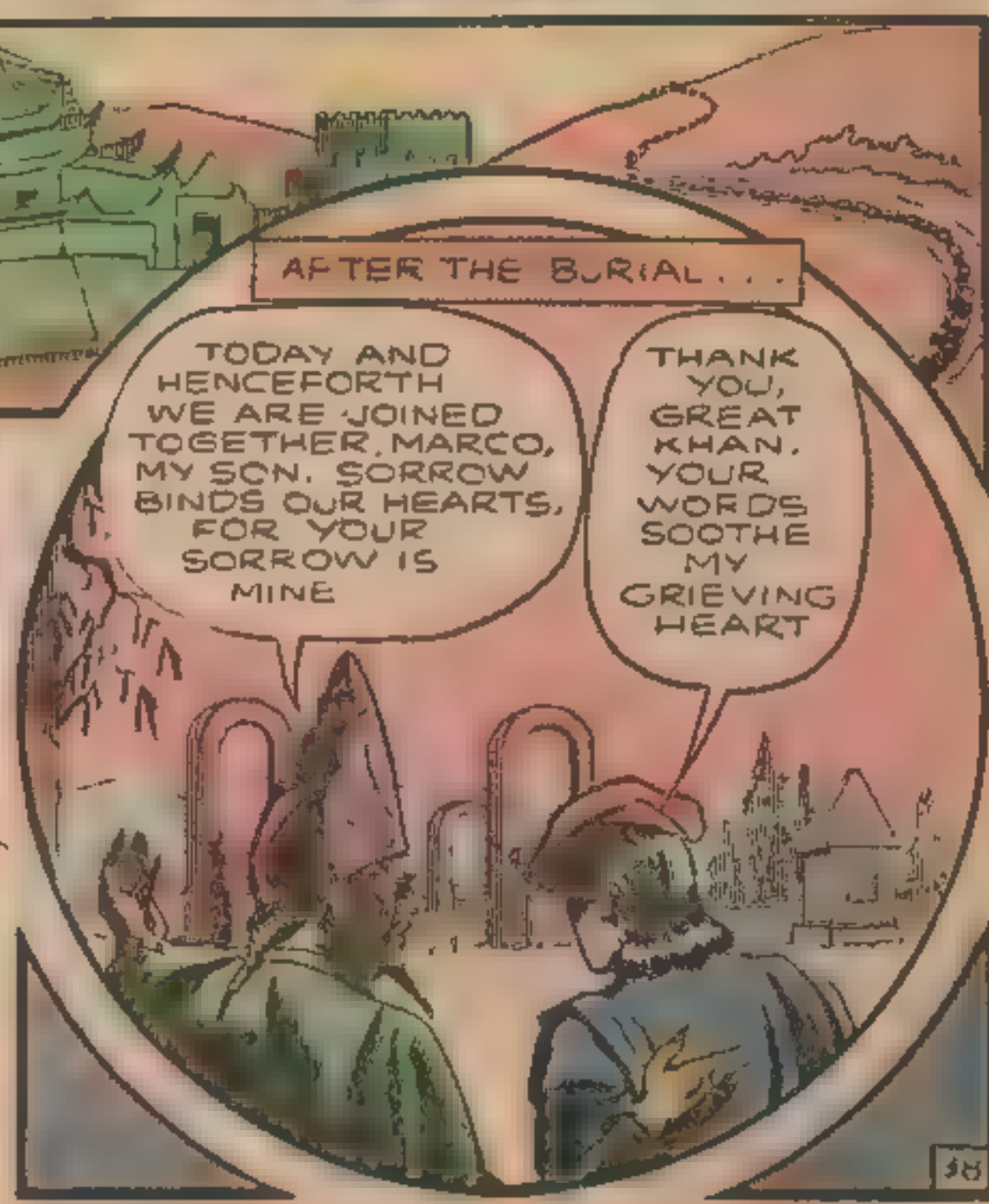

I AM MARCO POLO. IT IS TRUE THAT THESE MEN SHOULD BE TRIED FOR THE MURDER OF ACHMATH, BUT DO NOT TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY UPON YOURSELVES. IT IS FOR THE KHAN, TO TRY THEIR CASE.
SOME WEEKS LATER, AT THE COURT OF KUBLAI KHAN, POLO REVEALS THE DISHONEST DEALINGS OF ACHMATH. . .
THANK YOU, MARCO, FOR THE ENLIGHTENMENT. THE KILLERS OF ACHMATH HAVE RID THEIR COUNTRY OF A TRAITOR. THEY SHALL GO FREE.

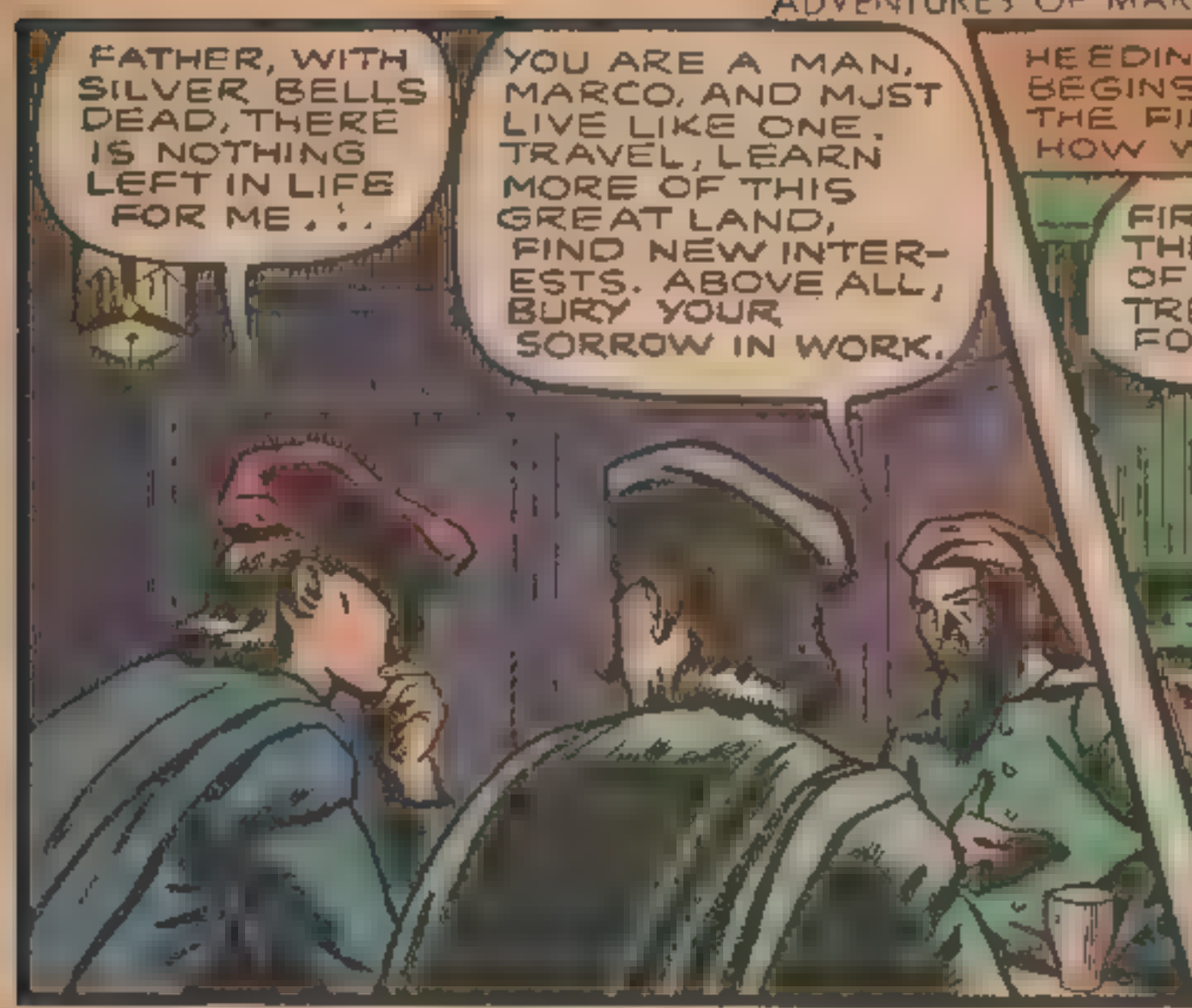

JUST THEN. . .
WHAT WOULD YOU, O WORTHY PHYSICIAN OF OUR COURT?
I BRING TIDINGS.. SORROWFUL TIDINGS FOR THE GREAT KHAN AND MARCO POLO.
PRINCESS SILVER BELLS DIED MOST PEACEFULLY IN HER SLUMBER THIS DAY.

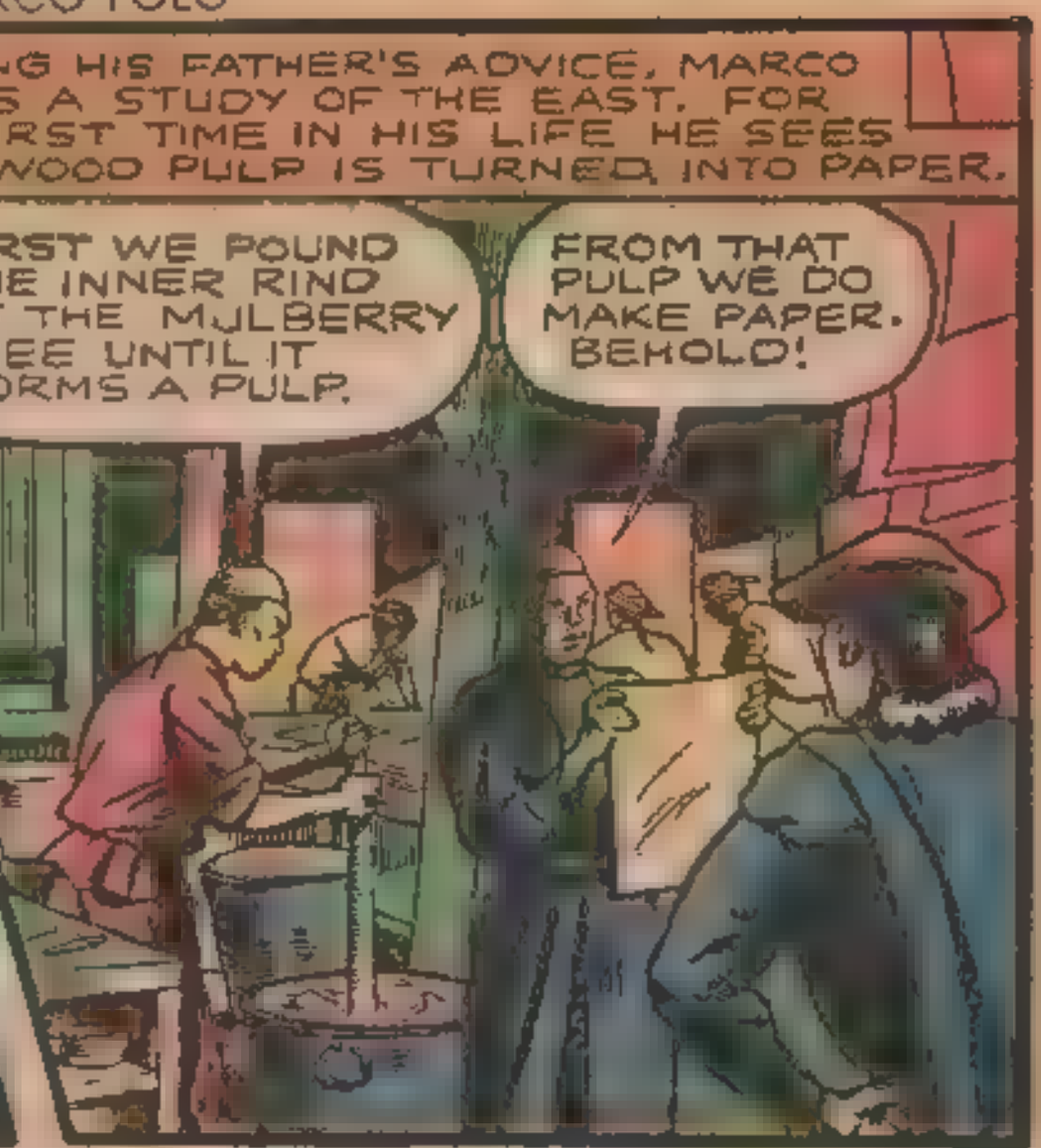

FROM THE ENTIRE EMPIRE OF KHAN COME SILENT, TEARFUL MOURNERS

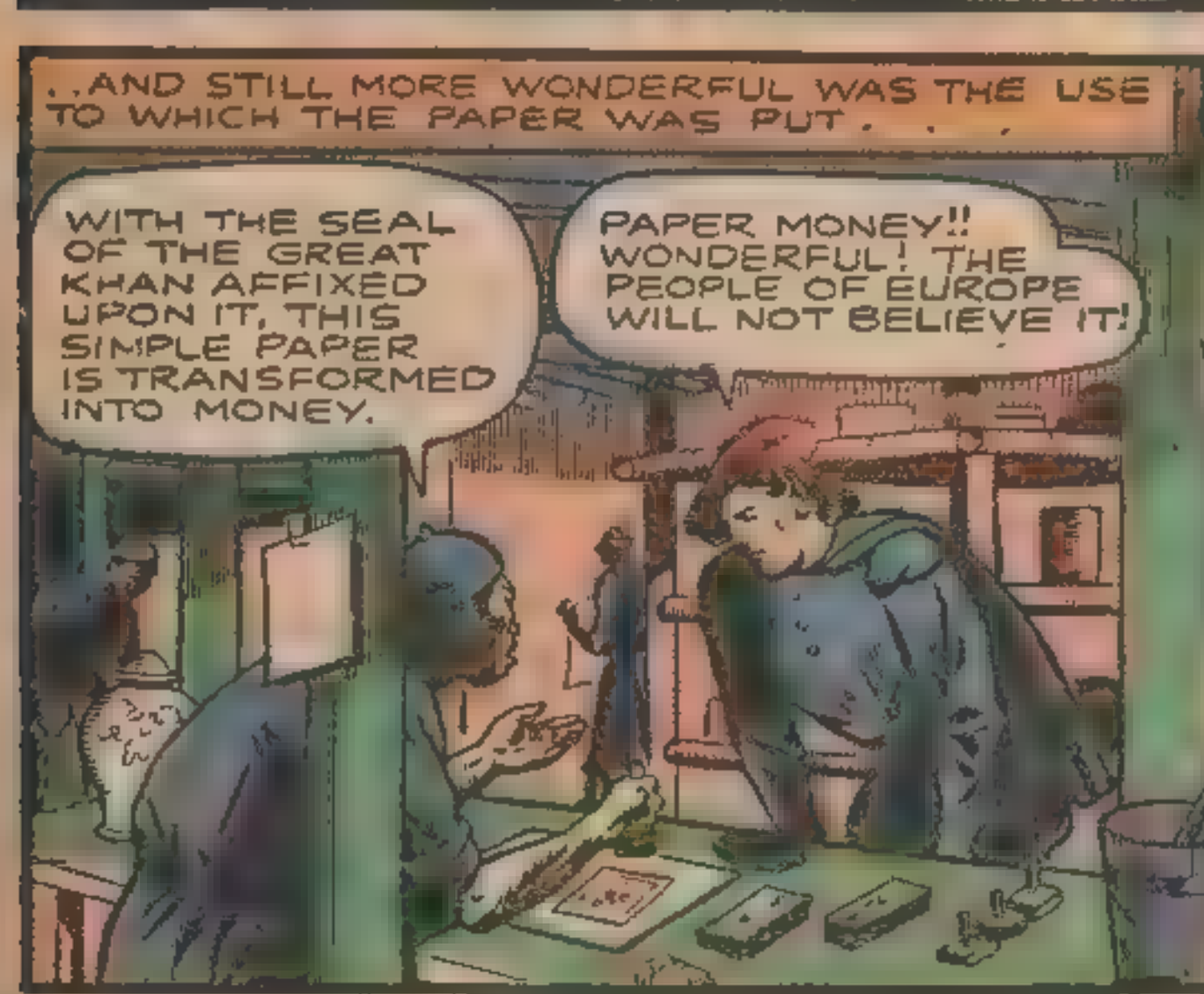
WITHIN THE PALACE, THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS SILVER BELLS LIES IN STATE... GOLD TRAPPINGS COVERED...

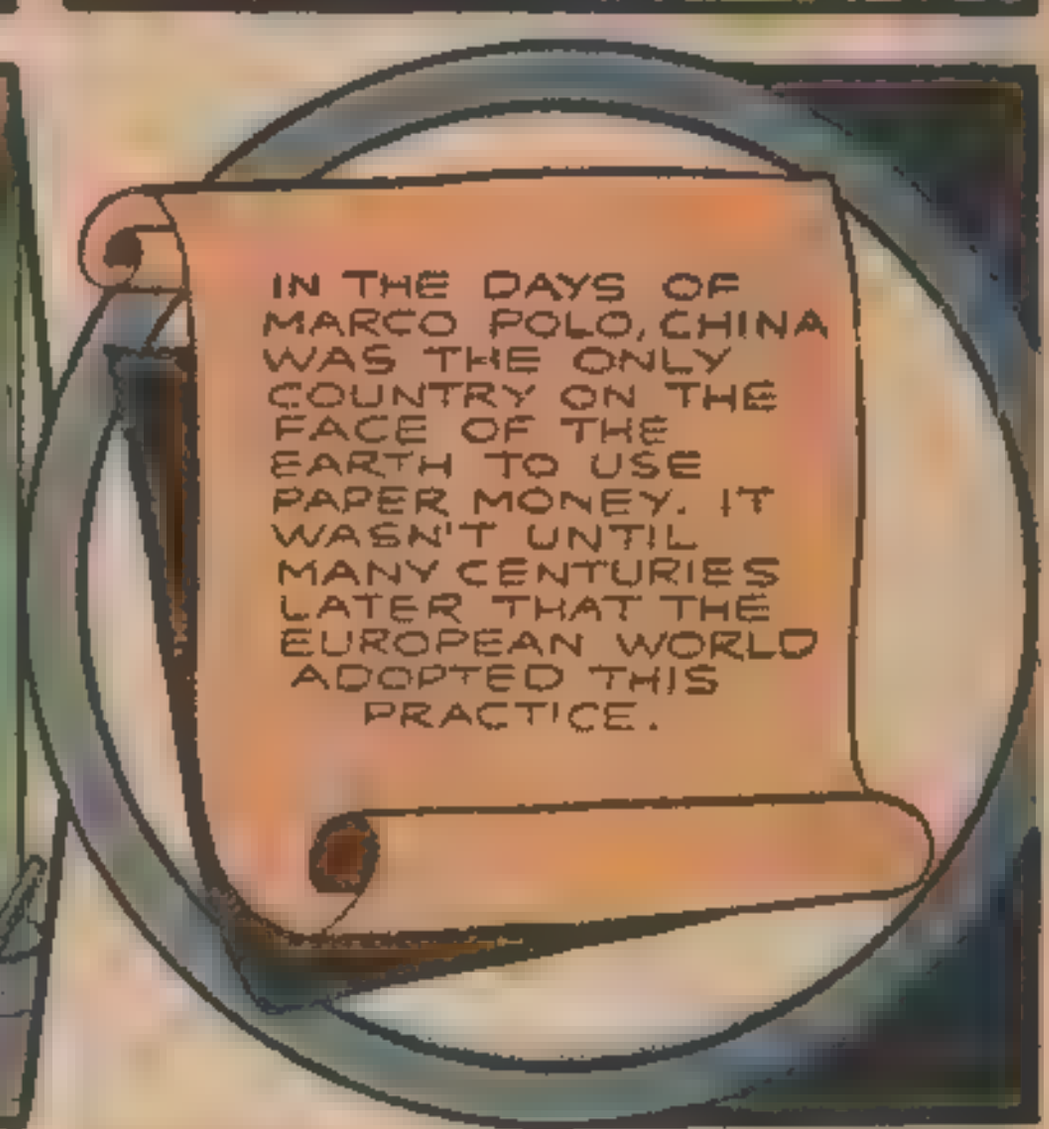
A THOUSAND HORSES JOIN THE FUNERAL MARCH COUNTLESS THOUSANDS OF LOYAL SUBJECTS TRUDGE ON FOOT.. A SAD DAY HAS FALLEN ON CATHAY

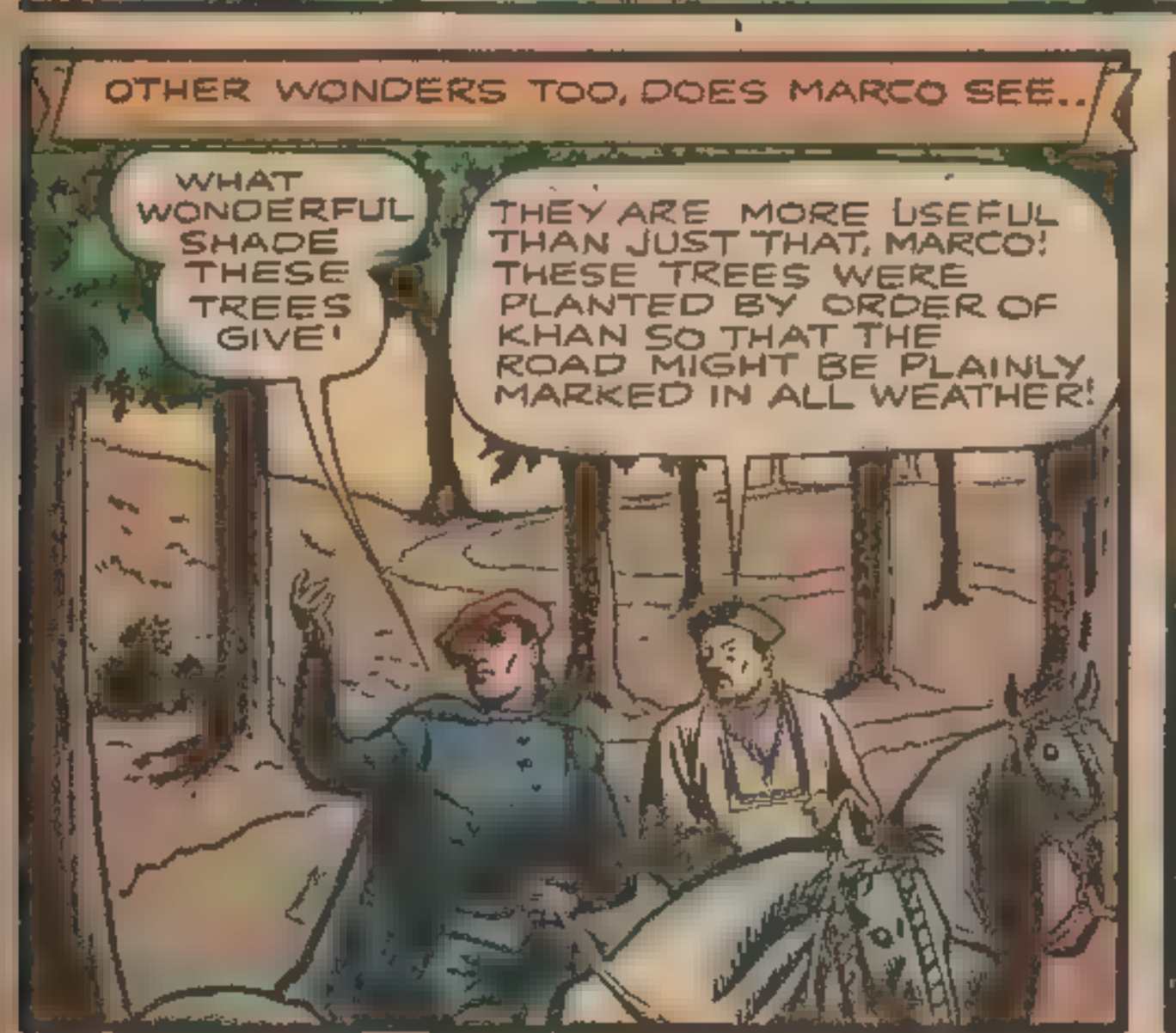

AFTER THE BURIAL...
TODAY AND HENCEFORTH WE ARE JOINED TOGETHER, MARCO, MY SON. SORROW BINDS OUR HEARTS, FOR YOUR SORROW IS MINE
THANK YOU, GREAT KHAN. YOUR WORDS SOOTHE MY GRIEVING HEART

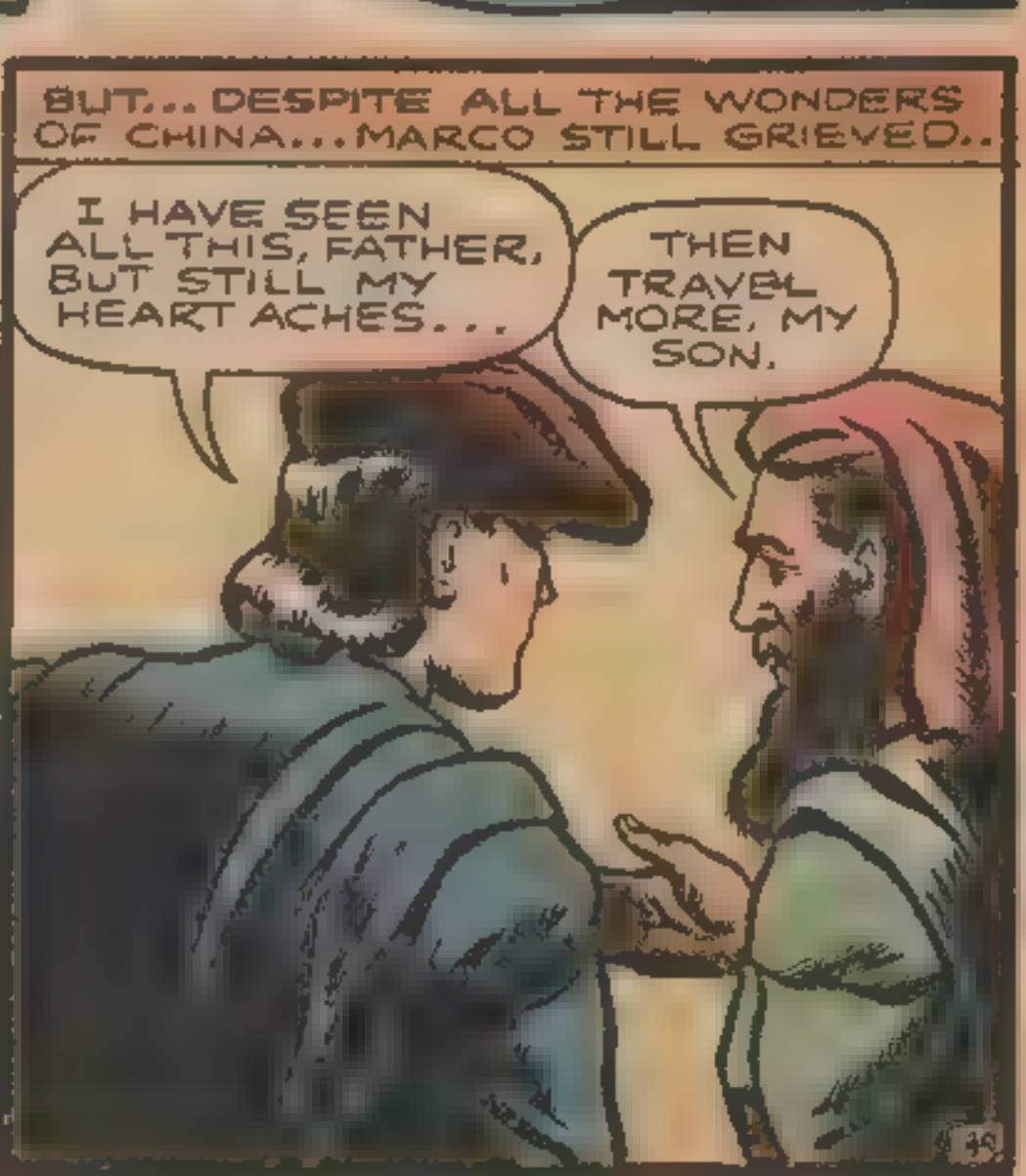

FATHER, WITH SILVER BELLS DEAD, THERE IS NOTHING LEFT IN LIFE FOR ME...
YOU ARE A MAN, MARCO, AND MUST LIVE LIKE ONE. TRAVEL, LEARN MORE OF THIS GREAT LAND, FIND NEW INTERESTS. ABOVE ALL, BURY YOUR SORROW IN WORK.


HEEDING HIS FATHER'S ADVICE, MARCO BEGINS A STUDY OF THE EAST. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE HE SEES HOW WOOD PULP IS TURNED INTO PAPER.
FIRST WE POUND THE INNER RIND OF THE MULBERRY TREE UNTIL IT FORMS A PULP.
FROM THAT PULP WE DO MAKE PAPER. BEHOLD!


...AND STILL MORE WONDERFUL WAS THE USE TO WHICH THE PAPER WAS PUT...
WITH THE SEAL OF THE GREAT KHAN AFFIXED UPON IT, THIS SIMPLE PAPER IS TRANSFORMED INTO MONEY.
PAPER MONEY!! WONDERFUL! THE PEOPLE OF EUROPE WILL NOT BELIEVE IT!

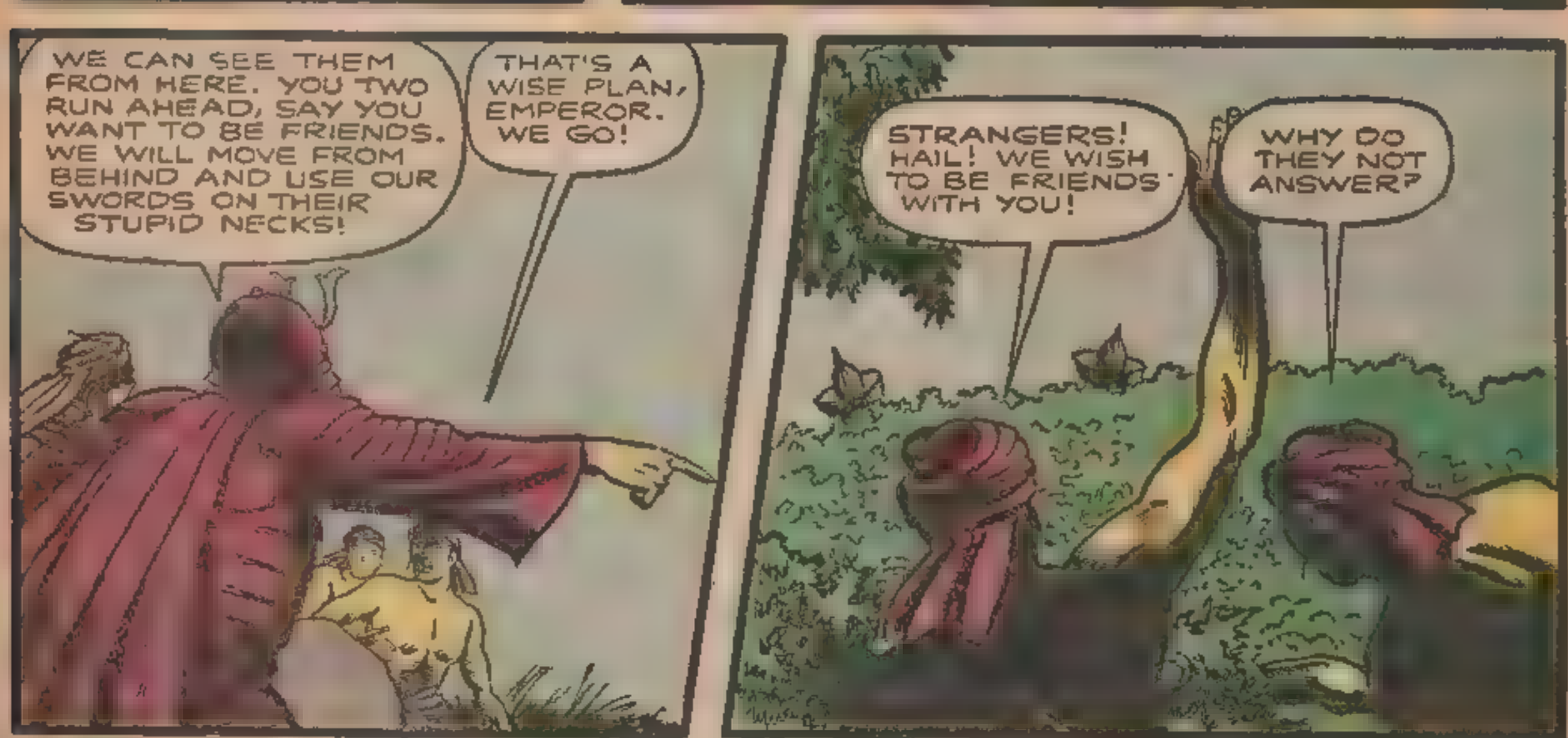

IN THE DAYS OF MARCO POLO, CHINA WAS THE ONLY COUNTRY ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH TO USE PAPER MONEY. IT WASN'T UNTIL MANY CENTURIES LATER THAT THE EUROPEAN WORLD ADOPTED THIS PRACTICE.

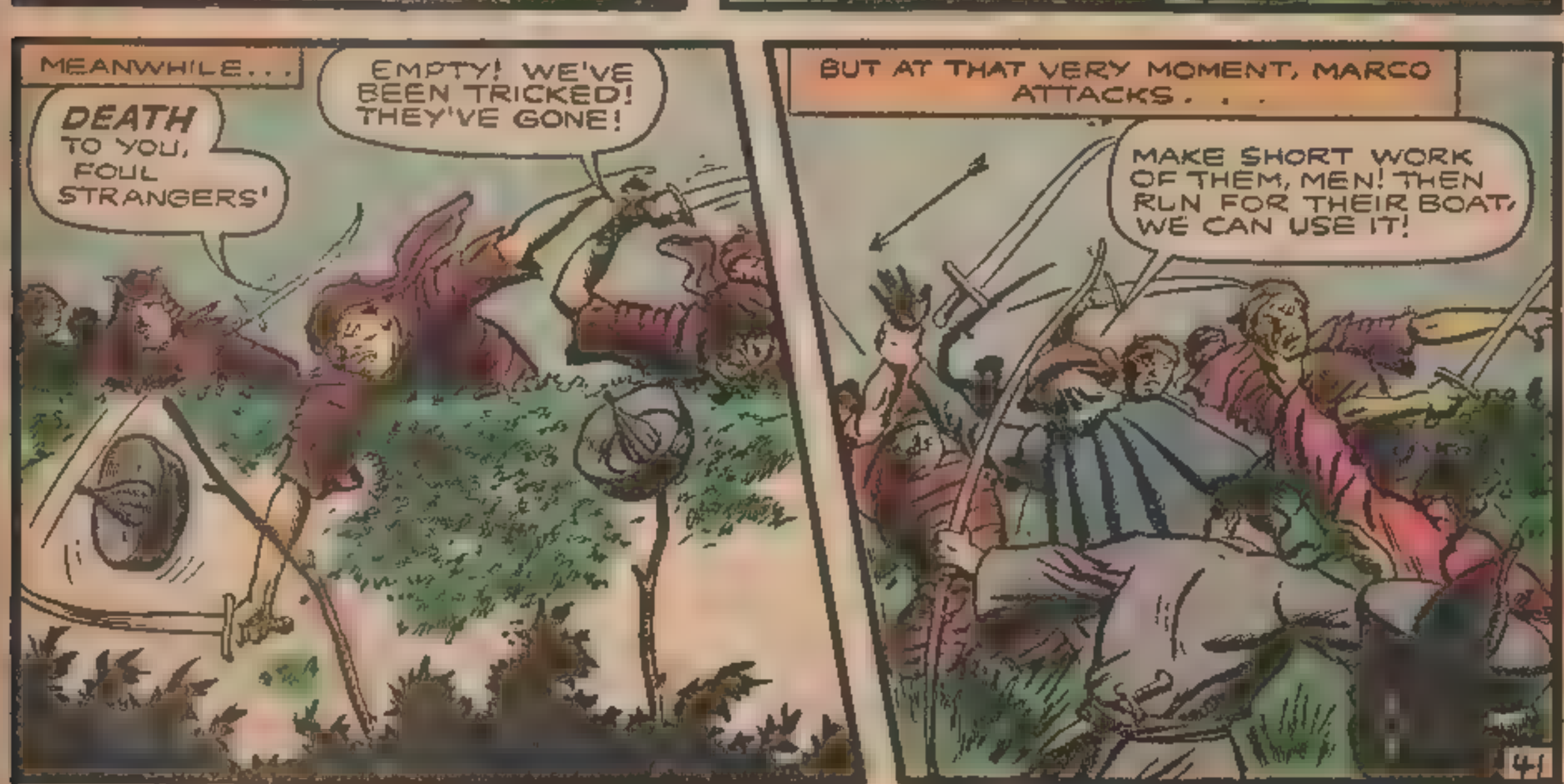

OTHER WONDERS TOO, DOES MARCO SEE..
WHAT WONDERFUL SHADE THESE TREES GIVE!
THEY ARE MORE USEFUL THAN JUST THAT, MARCO! THESE TREES WERE PLANTED BY ORDER OF KHAN SO THAT THE ROAD MIGHT BE PLAINLY MARKED IN ALL WEATHER!

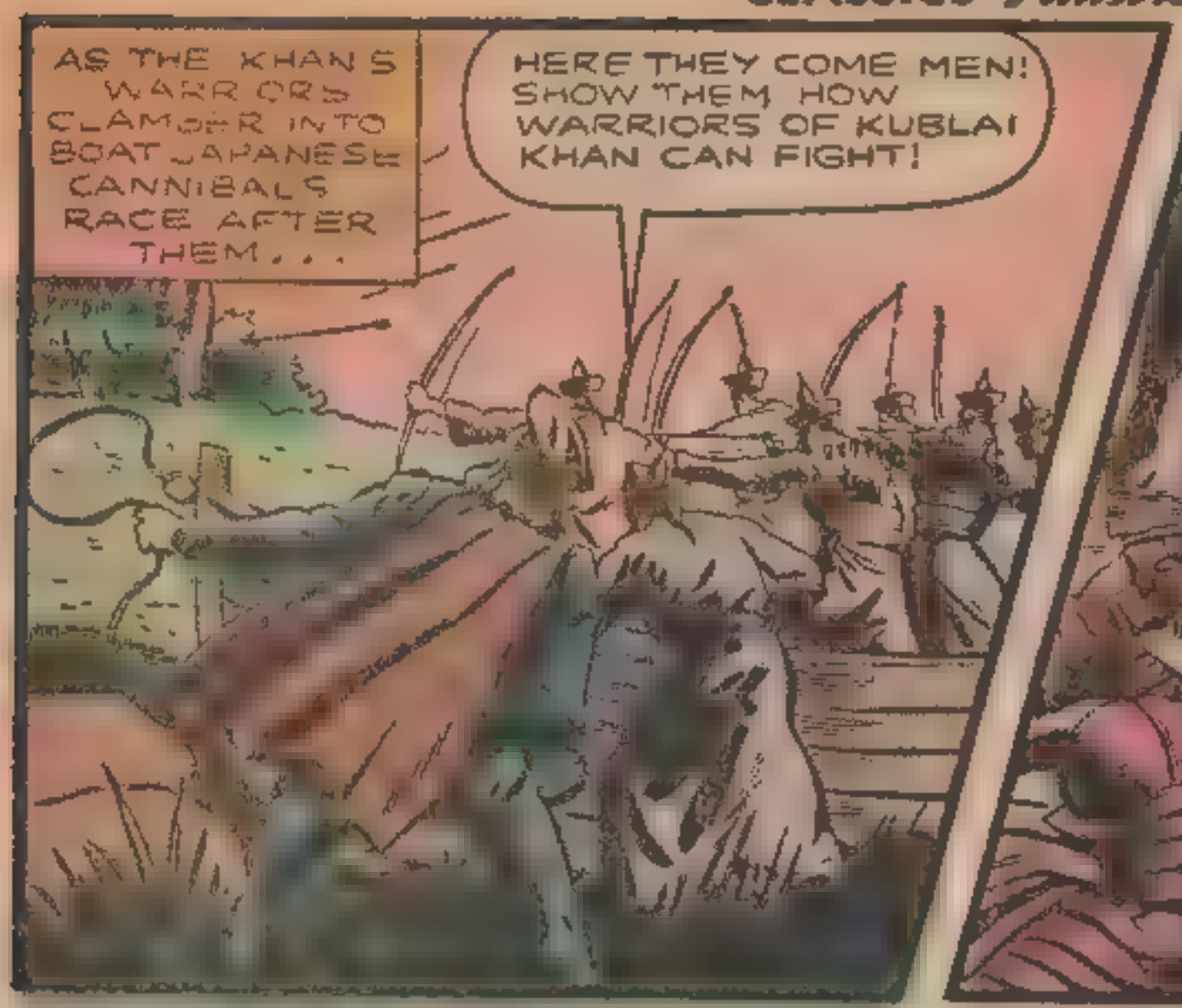

BUT... DESPITE ALL THE WONDERS OF CHINA... MARCO STILL GRIEVED..
I HAVE SEEN ALL THIS, FATHER, BUT STILL MY HEART ACHES...
THEN TRAVEL MORE, MY SON.

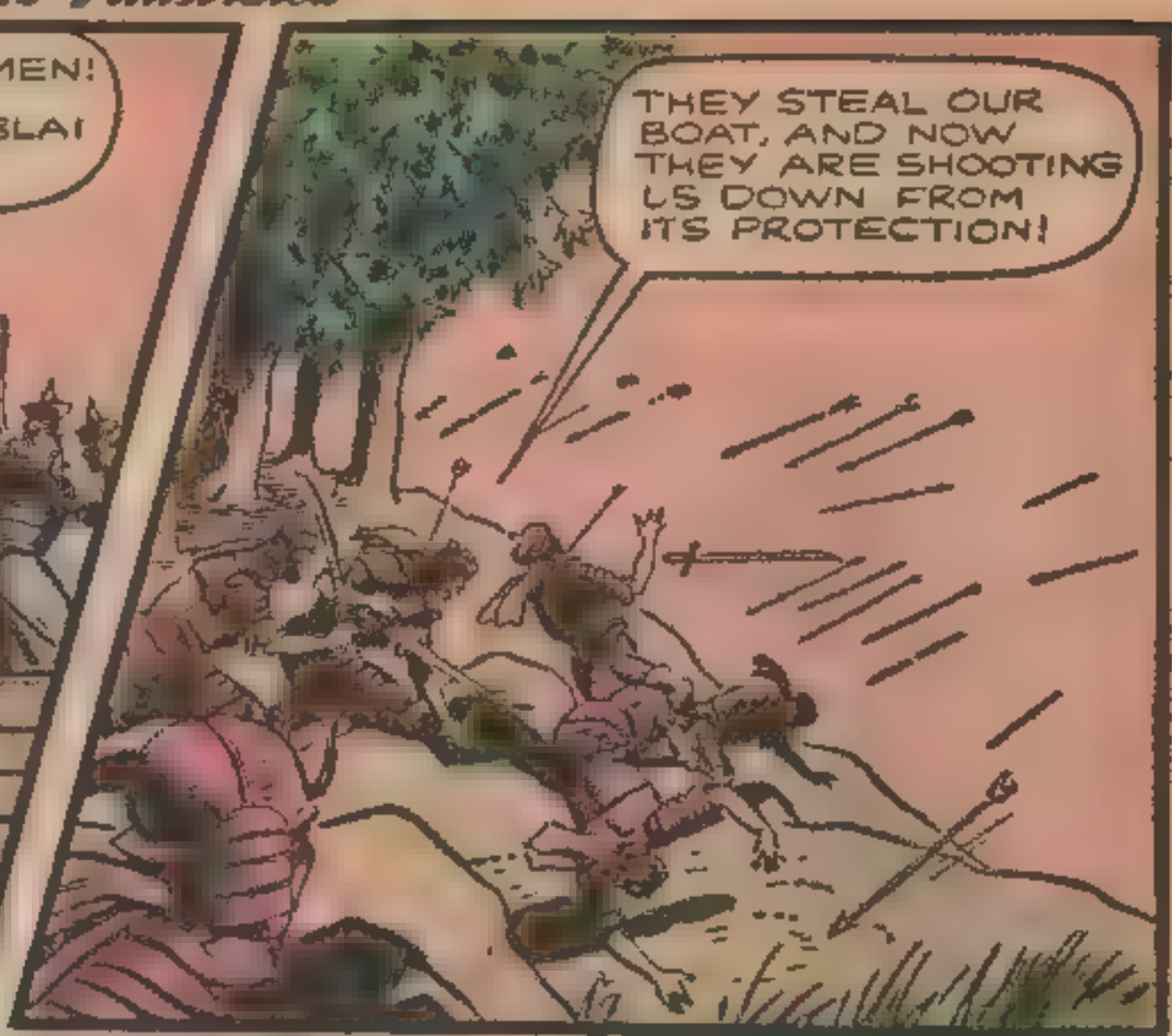
JUST AS MARCO IS ABOUT TO DEPART ON A JOURNEY, HE IS SUMMONED BEFORE KUBLAI KHAN . . .
SOME OF MY SEAFARERS HAVE BEEN WRECKED OFF THE COAST OF JAPAN, MARCO. THE CANNIBALS WHO INHABIT THOSE ISLANDS HAVE PUT THEM TO DEATH. WOULD YOU LEAD AN EXPEDITION TO THE ISLANDS TO TEACH THESE PEOPLE A LESSON?
I WILL GO GLADLY. THIS TASK PERHAPS WILL HELP ME FORGET MY SORROW, KUBLAI KHAN.
ON THE TREACHEROUS CHINA SEA, MARCO AND HIS PARTY ARE GRAVELY THREATENED BY THE FURY OF AN UNEXPECTED STORM THAT TOSSES THEIR SMALL BOAT ABOUT MERCILESSLY. . .
. . AND, WITH THEIR GOAL IN SIGHT, THEY ARE SUDDENLY DASHED AGAINST THE HUGE, JAGGED COASTAL ROCKS. .
THIS WAY, MEN! WE MUST SWIM OUR WAY THROUGH THE CHANNEL. KEEP YOUR COURAGE UP, WE'LL MAKE IT!
WE'VE BEEN FORTUNATE NOT ONLY BY SAVING OUR OWN LIVES, BUT WE'VE ALSO SALVAGED OUR WEAPONS. THAT IS GOOD. NOW WE MUST TAKE TO THE HILLS AND HIDE. WE'LL TRICK THE JAPANESE, BUT WE MUST HASTEN, FOR OUR PRESENCE WILL SOON BE KNOWN.

MARCO WAS RIGHT. FOR EVEN AS HE SPEAKS, HOSTILE EYES ARE WATCHING THE SHIP-WRECKED CREW. . .
STRANGERS ON THE ISLAND! THE EMPEROR MUST KNOW OF THIS!
I RUN. SPREAD THE NEWS!
AND...THE NEXT DAY...
YOU COME IN TIME, O' MIGHTY EMPEROR, THEY JUST MOVE TO HILLS.. I WATCH!


WE CAN SEE THEM FROM HERE. YOU TWO RUN AHEAD, SAY YOU WANT TO BE FRIENDS. WE WILL MOVE FROM BEHIND AND USE OUR SWORDS ON THEIR STUPID NECKS!
THAT'S A WISE PLAN, EMPEROR. WE GO!
STRANGERS! HAIL! WE WISH TO BE FRIENDS WITH YOU!
WHY DO THEY NOT ANSWER?


MEANWHILE...
EMPTY! WE'VE BEEN TRICKED! THEY'VE GONE!
DEATH TO YOU, FOUL STRANGERS!
BUT AT THAT VERY MOMENT, MARCO ATTACKS. . .
MAKE SHORT WORK OF THEM, MEN! THEN RUN FOR THEIR BOAT, WE CAN USE IT!

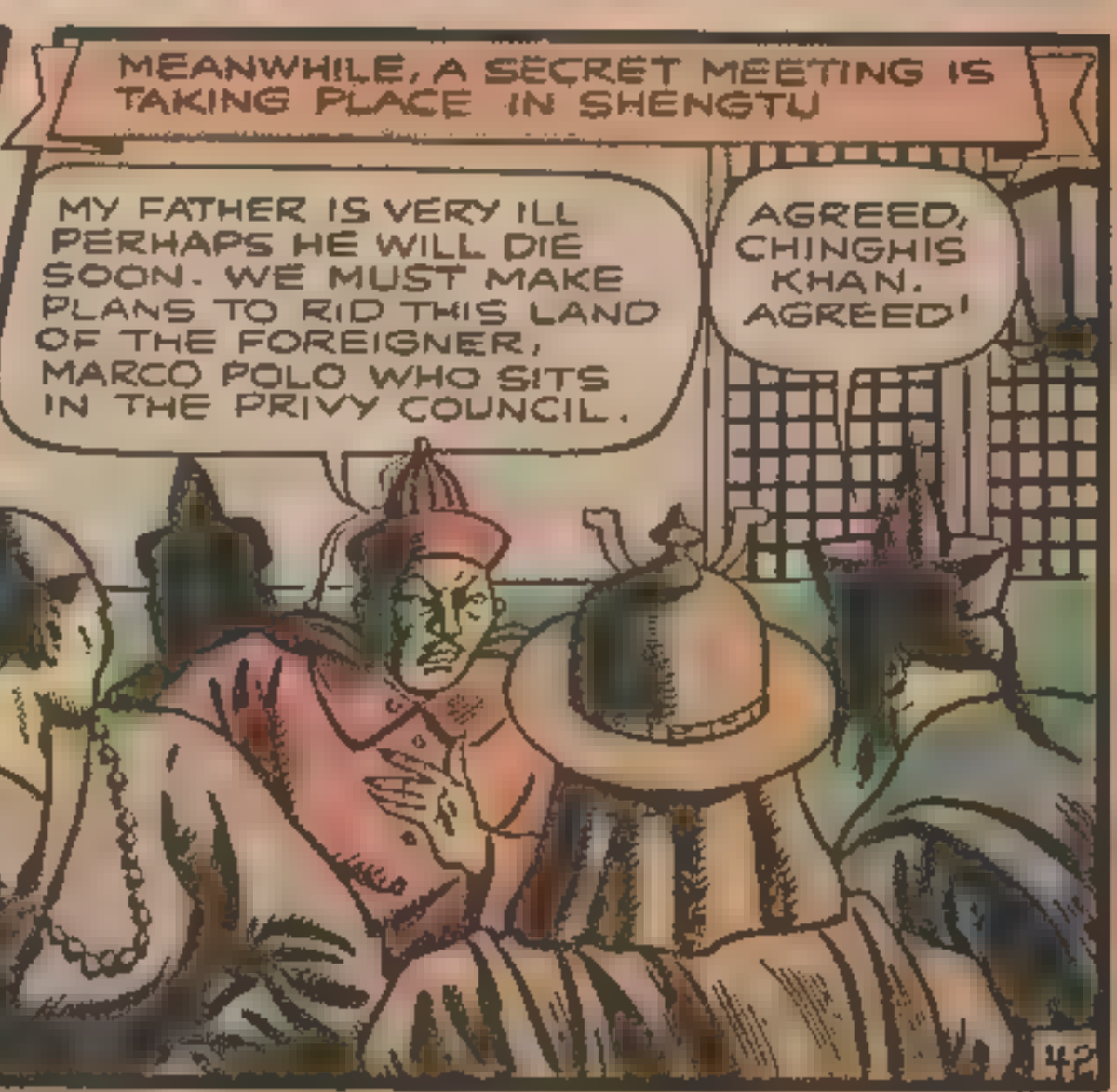

AS THE KHAN'S WARRIORS CLAMBER INTO BOAT JAPANESE CANNIBALS RACE AFTER THEM...
HERE THEY COME MEN! SHOW THEM HOW WARRIORS OF KUBLAI KHAN CAN FIGHT!


THEY STEAL OUR BOAT, AND NOW THEY ARE SHOOTING US DOWN FROM ITS PROTECTION!

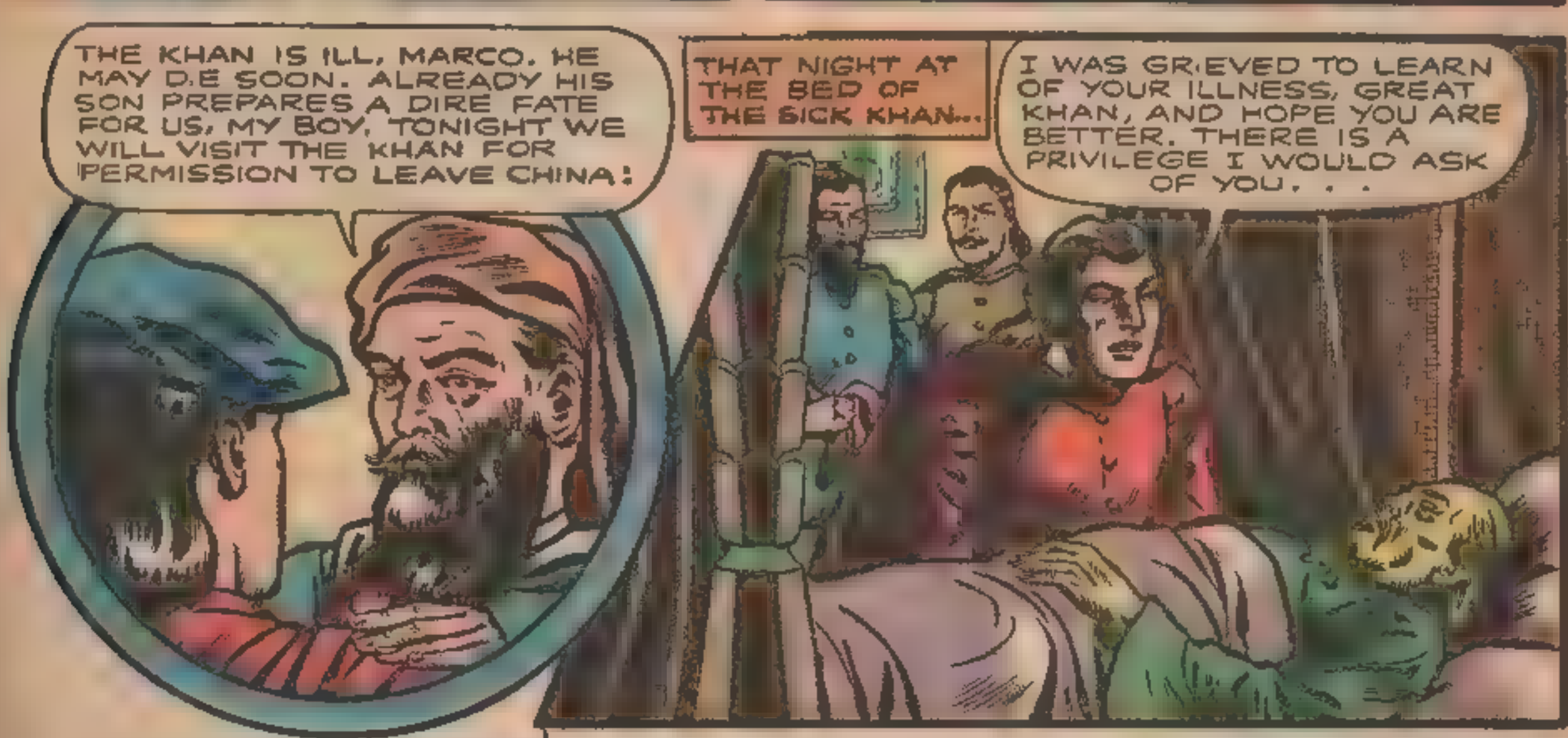
LOOK! A NOTE! THEY DARE TO SEND US A NOTE!

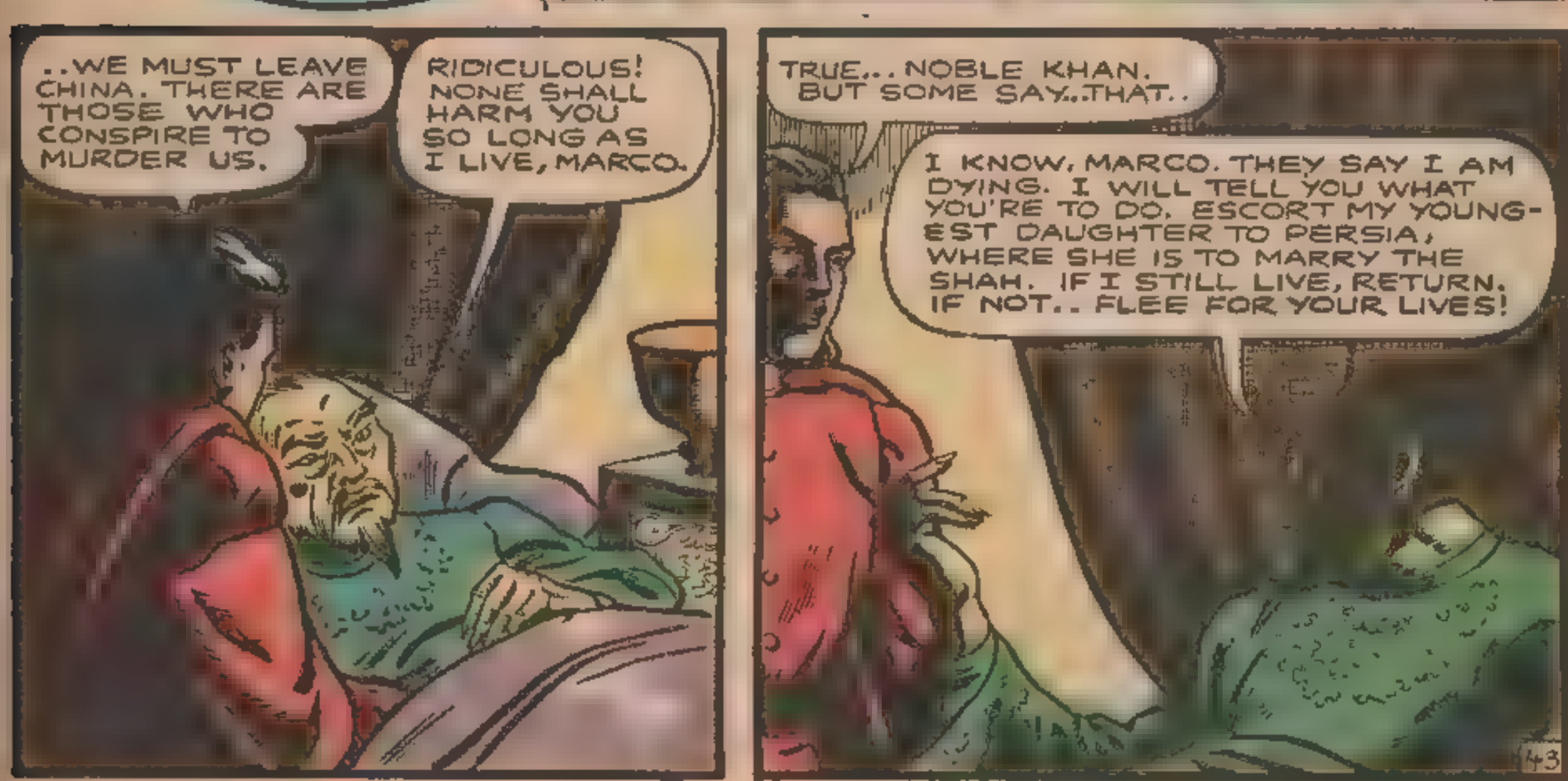
IT IS A WARNING! LISTEN! THEY SAY IF WE MOLEST THE KHAN'S SEAFARERS AGAIN, THEY WILL COME TO THE ISLAND OF JAPAN IN GREAT FORCE AND LAY IT TO WASTE!

AND A PROPITIOUS WIND CARRIES THE BRAVE WARRIORS BACK TO CHINA
I HAVE SEEN MANY STRANGE PEOPLE, BUT NEVER HAVE I HATED ANY.. EXCEPT THESE SNEAKY MEN OF JAPAN


MEANWHILE, A SECRET MEETING IS TAKING PLACE IN SHENGTU
MY FATHER IS VERY ILL PERHAPS HE WILL DIE SOON. WE MUST MAKE PLANS TO RID THIS LAND OF THE FOREIGNER, MARCO POLO WHO SITS IN THE PRIVY COUNCIL.
AGREED, CHINGHIS KHAN. AGREED!

MONTHS LATER, MARCO RETURNS TO SHENGTU . . .
WELCOME HOME, SON!
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, NEPHEW?
GREETINGS, FATHER AND UNCLE. I HAVE BEEN TO THE ISLAND OF JAPAN..TO JAVA, INDIA AND CEYLON. I AM WEARY.
WEARY, MARCO? THAT IS TOO BAD.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, UNCLE? SPEAK CLEARLY!

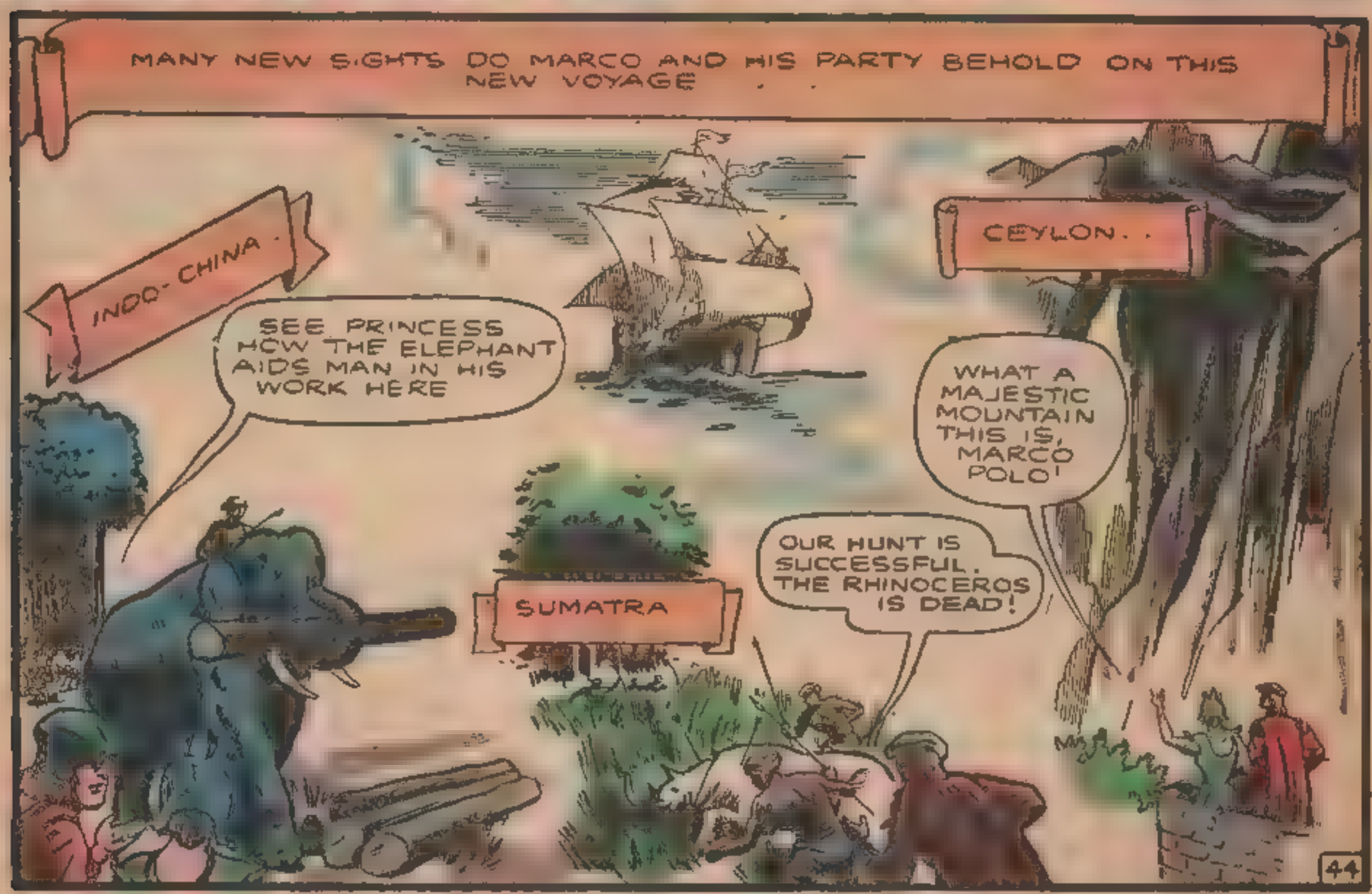

THE KHAN IS ILL, MARCO. HE MAY DIE SOON. ALREADY HIS SON PREPARES A DIRE FATE FOR US, MY BOY, TONIGHT WE WILL VISIT THE KHAN FOR PERMISSION TO LEAVE CHINA!
THAT NIGHT AT THE BED OF THE SICK KHAN...
I WAS GRIEVED TO LEARN OF YOUR ILLNESS, GREAT KHAN, AND HOPE YOU ARE BETTER. THERE IS A PRIVILEGE I WOULD ASK OF YOU. . .

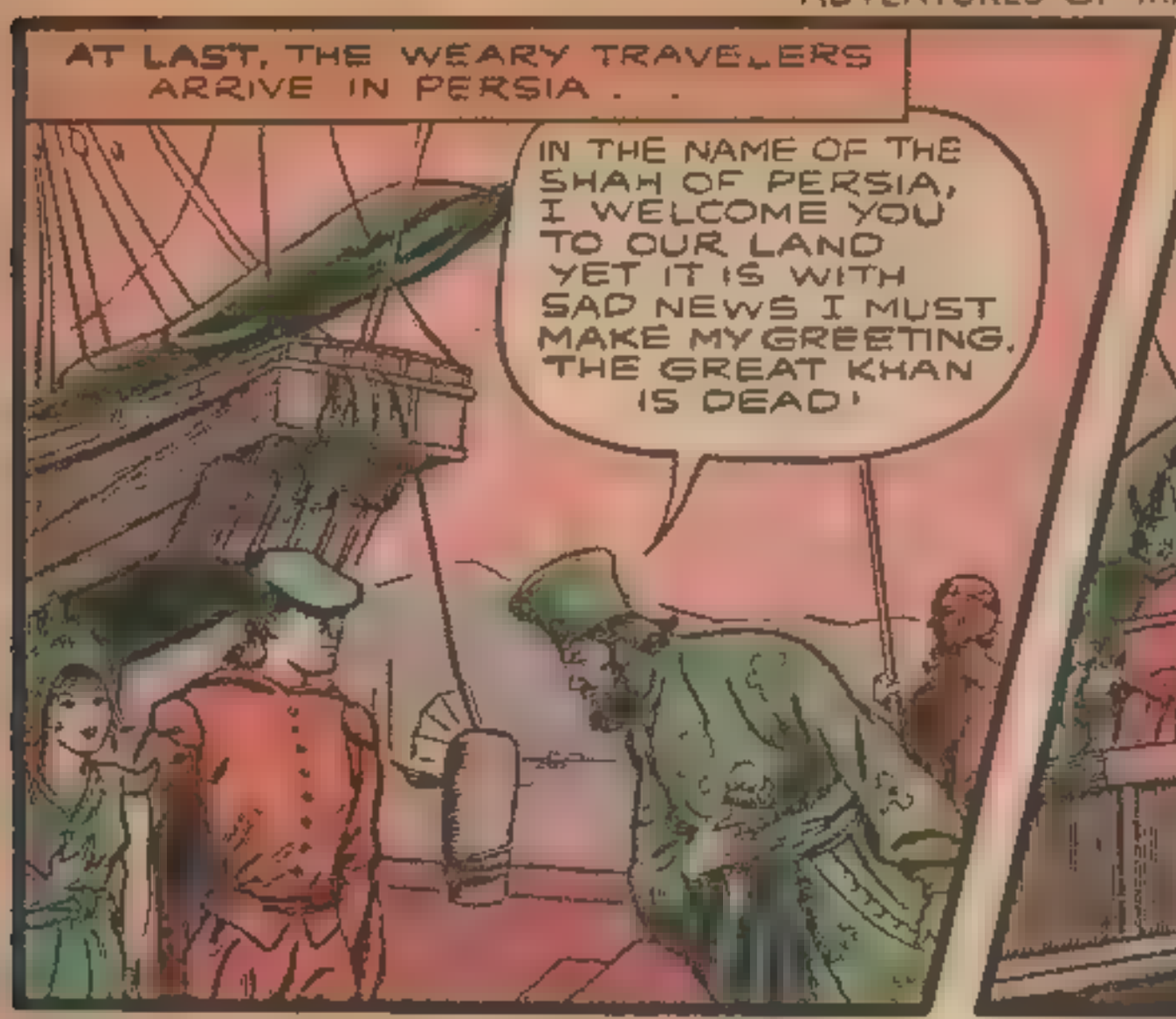

..WE MUST LEAVE CHINA. THERE ARE THOSE WHO CONSPIRE TO MURDER US.
RIDICULOUS! NONE SHALL HARM YOU SO LONG AS I LIVE, MARCO.
TRUE... NOBLE KHAN. BUT SOME SAY..THAT..
I KNOW, MARCO. THEY SAY I AM DYING. I WILL TELL YOU WHAT YOU'RE TO DO. ESCORT MY YOUNGEST DAUGHTER TO PERSIA, WHERE SHE IS TO MARRY THE SHAH. IF I STILL LIVE, RETURN. IF NOT.. FLEE FOR YOUR LIVES!

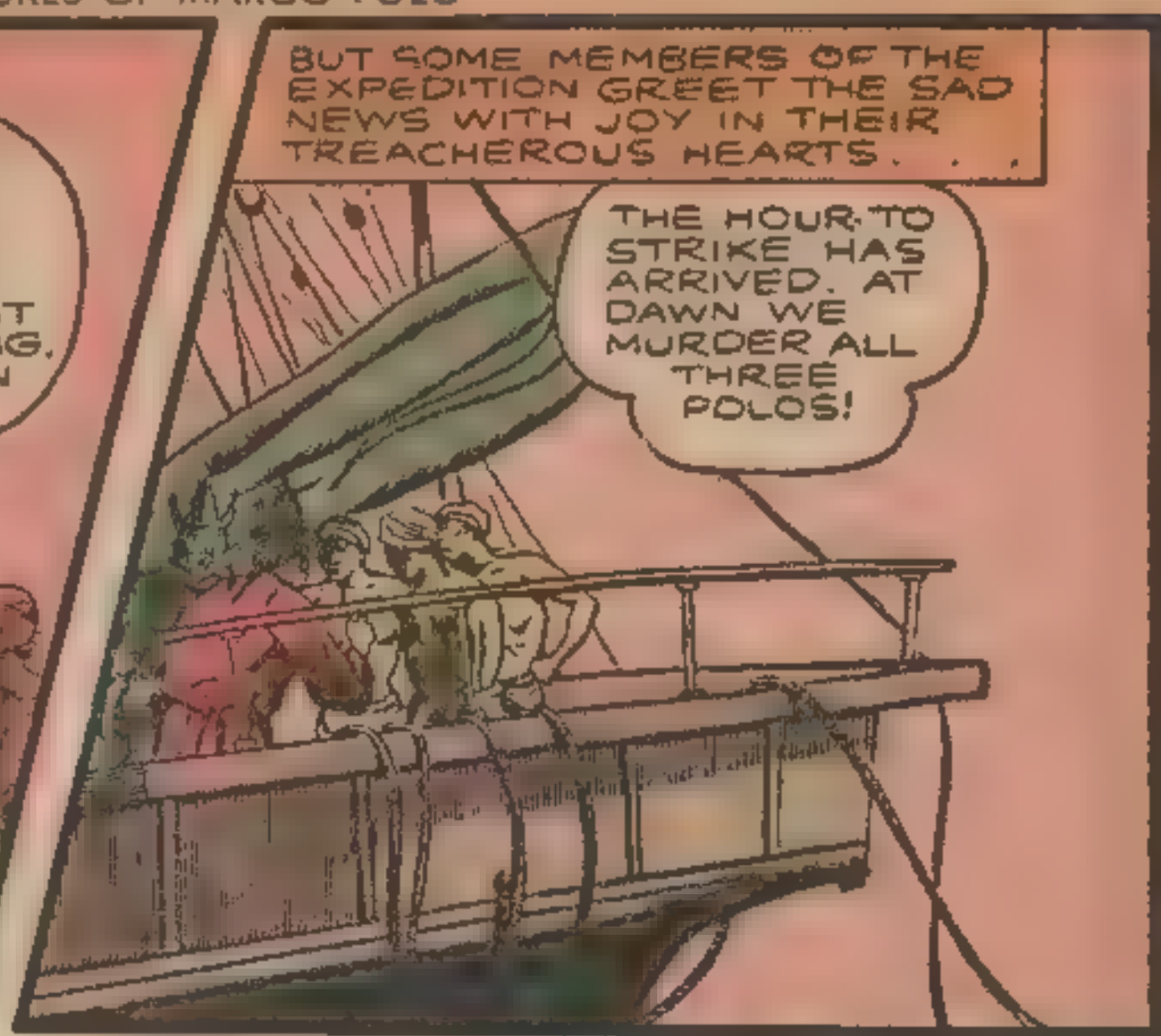
SO... ONCE MORE MARCO POLO SETS OUT ON A NEW ADVENTURE . . .
FEAR NOT, PRINCESS THE VOYAGE SHALL BE MADE IN YON TRUSTY BOAT AND WE SHALL PROTECT YOU FROM ALL HARM.

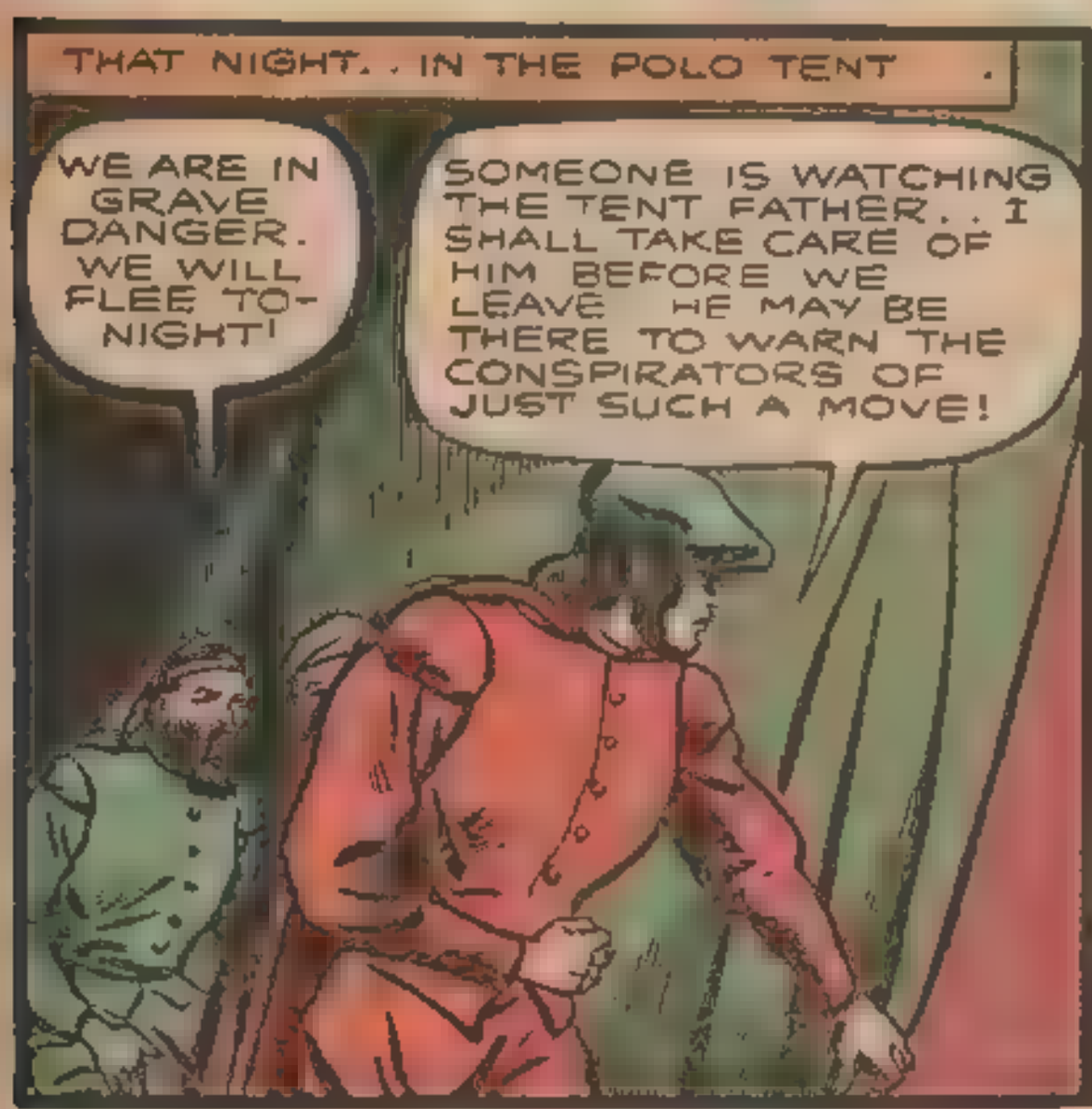
BUT , UNKNOWN TO MARCO POLO, EVIL IS AFOOT.
YOU HAVE ENOUGH MEN ABOARD AS SOON AS YOU LEARN OF MY FATHER'S DEATH... SLAY THE POLOS!
IT WILL BE DONE CHINGHIS

THIS IS YOUR LAST VOYAGE, MARCO POLO ALL OF THE HONORS MY FATHER SHOULD HAVE BESTOWED ON ME HAVE BEEN GIVEN YOU BUT WITH YOUR MURDER, THEY SHALL BE MINE!


MANY NEW SIGHTS DO MARCO AND HIS PARTY BEHOLD ON THIS NEW VOYAGE . .
INDO-CHINA
SEE PRINCESS HOW THE ELEPHANT AIDS MAN IN HIS WORK HERE
CEYLON . .
WHAT A MAJESTIC MOUNTAIN THIS IS, MARCO POLO!
SUMATRA
OUR HUNT IS SUCCESSFUL. THE RHINOCEROS IS DEAD!

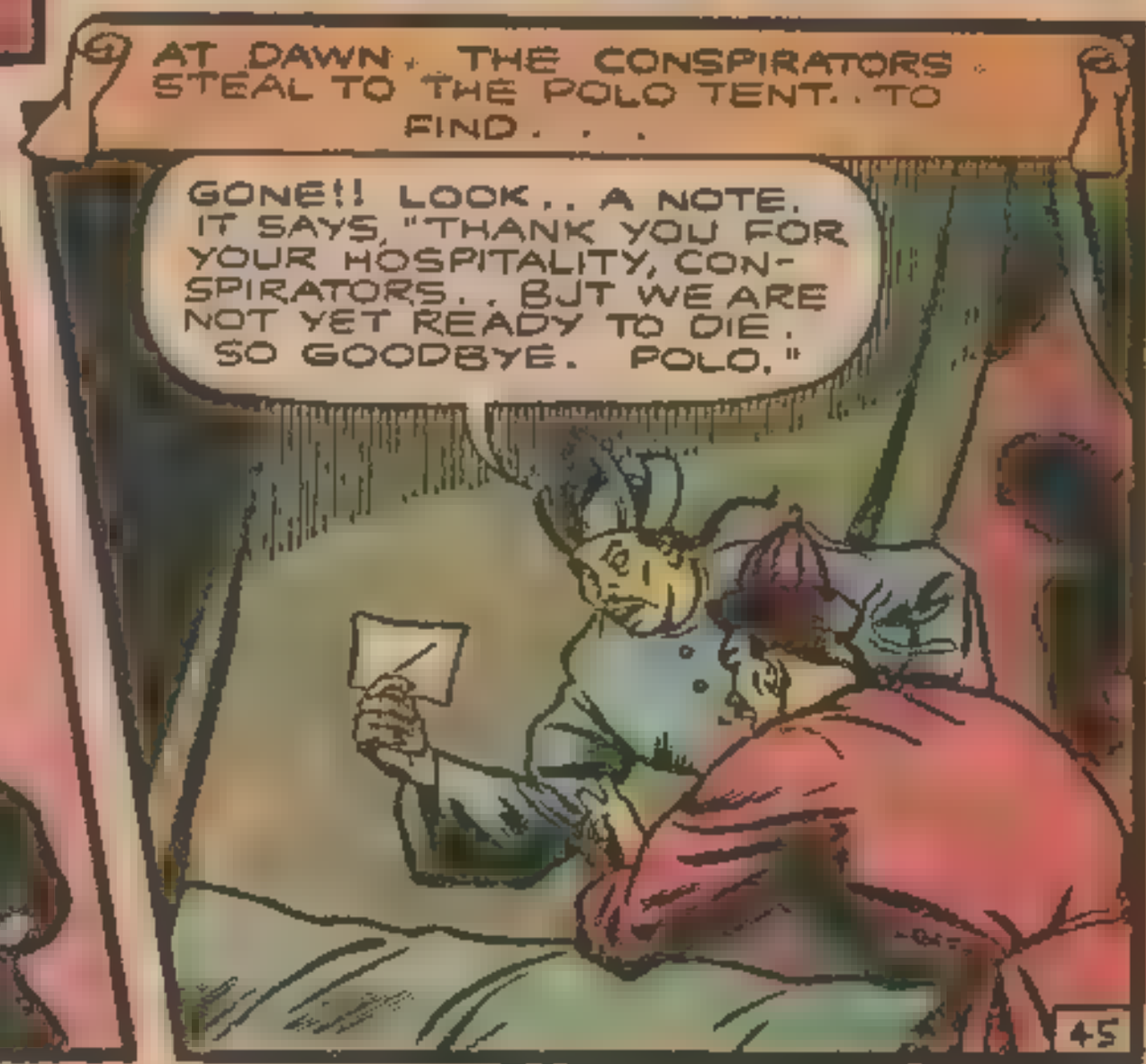

AT LAST, THE WEARY TRAVELERS ARRIVE IN PERSIA . .
IN THE NAME OF THE SHAH OF PERSIA, I WELCOME YOU TO OUR LAND YET IT IS WITH SAD NEWS I MUST MAKE MY GREETING. THE GREAT KHAN IS DEAD!

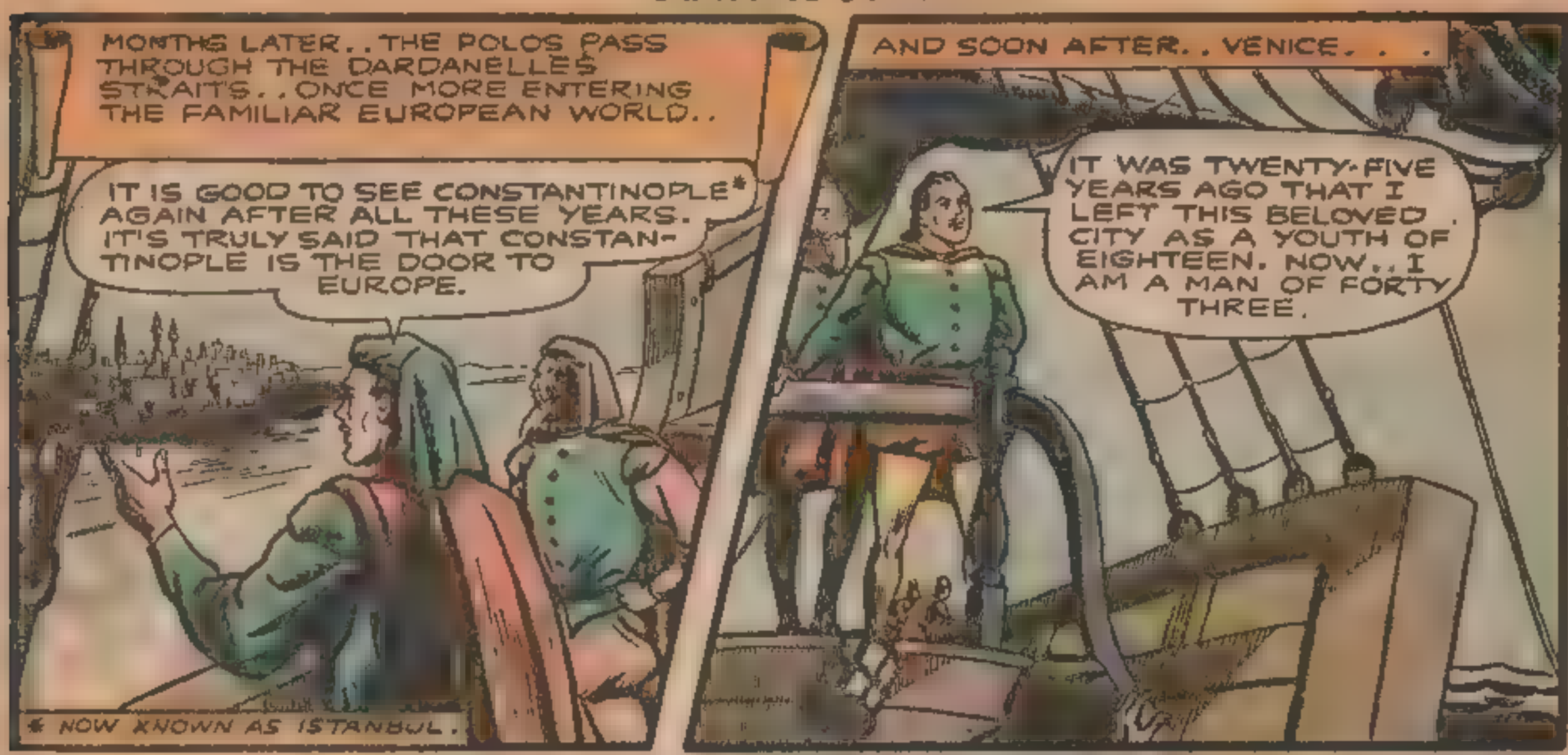

BUT SOME MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION GREET THE SAD NEWS WITH JOY IN THEIR TREACHEROUS HEARTS . . .
THE HOUR TO STRIKE HAS ARRIVED. AT DAWN WE MURDER ALL THREE POLOS!

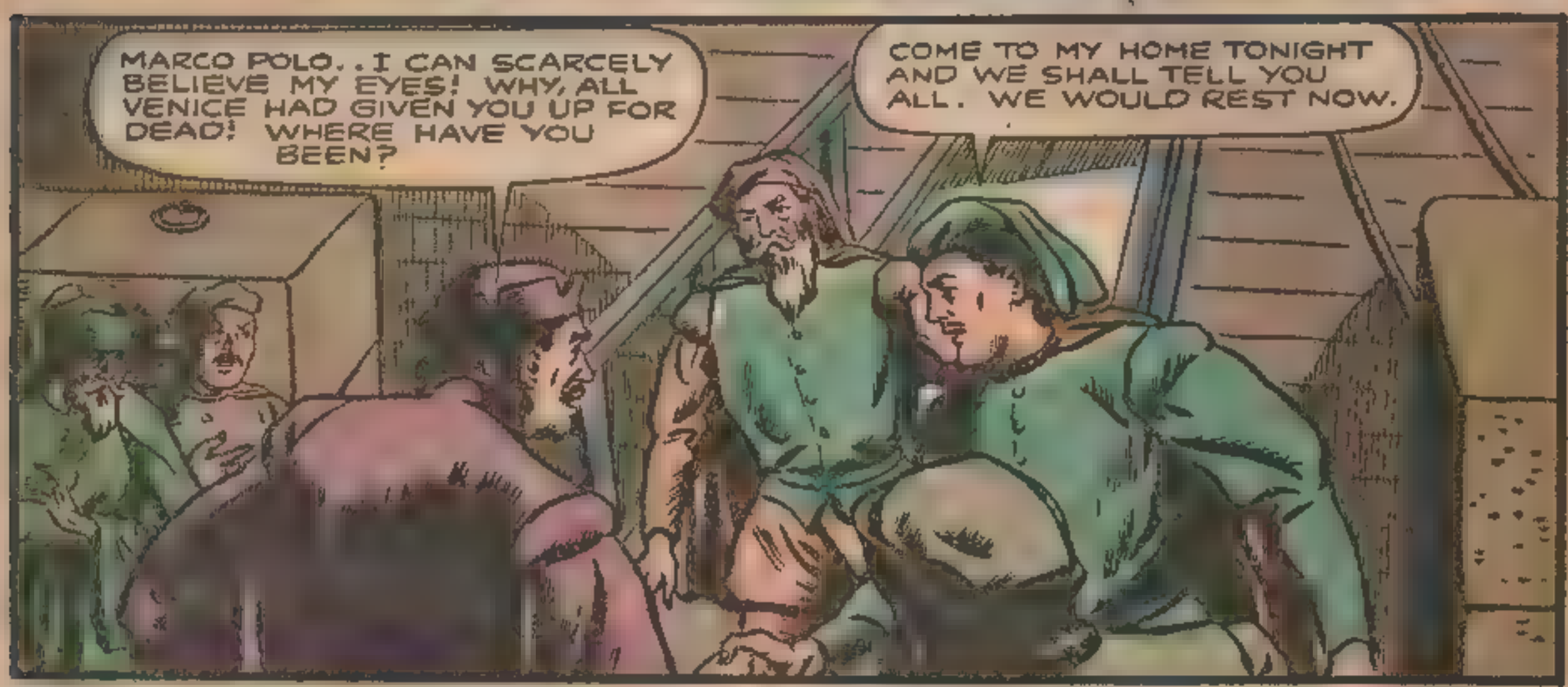

THAT NIGHT. . IN THE POLO TENT .
WE ARE IN GRAVE DANGER. WE WILL FLEE TO-NIGHT!
SOMEONE IS WATCHING THE TENT FATHER. . I SHALL TAKE CARE OF HIM BEFORE WE LEAVE HE MAY BE THERE TO WARN THE CONSPIRATORS OF JUST SUCH A MOVE!

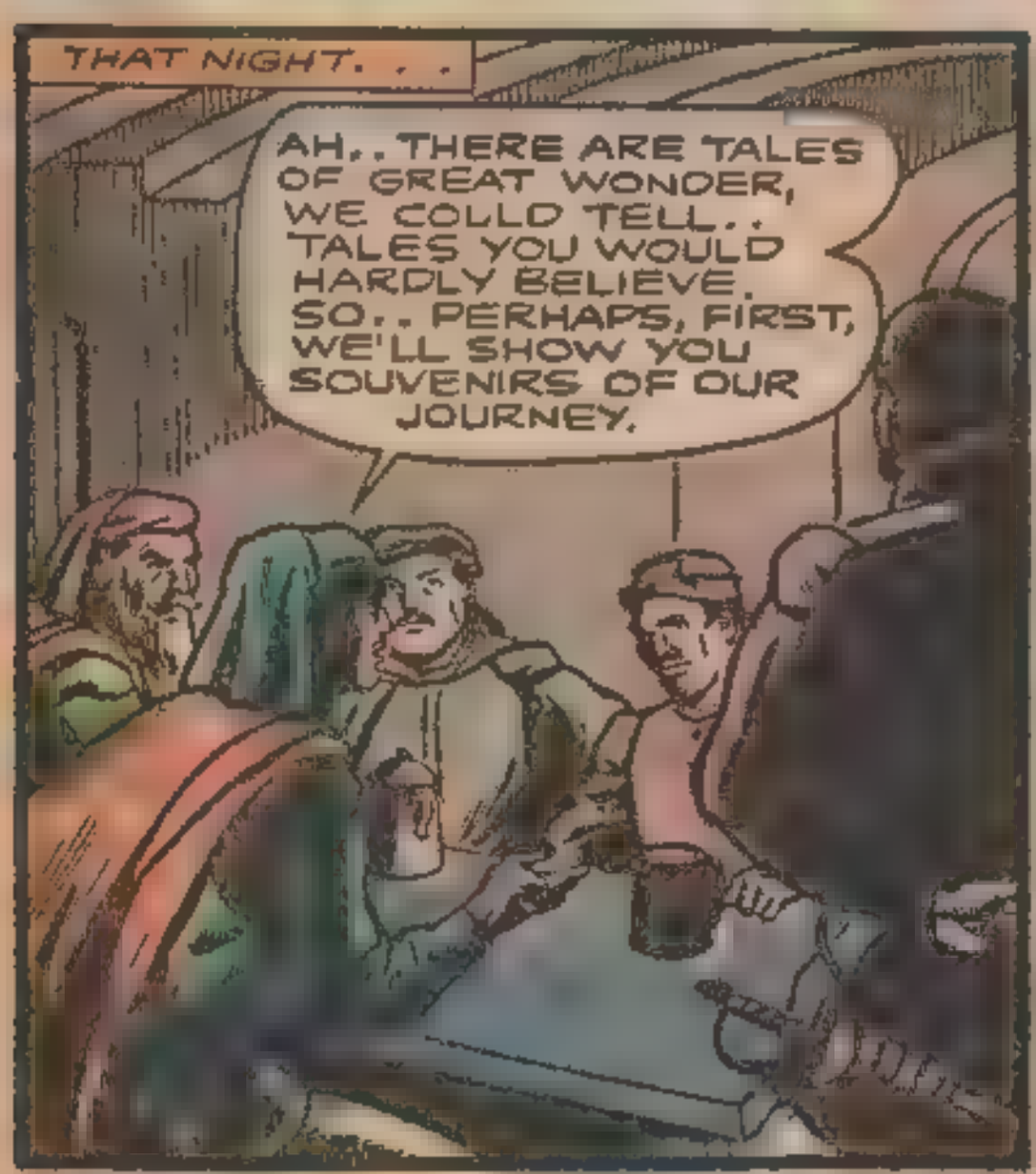
THERE! NOW YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO WARN THE OTHERS. .

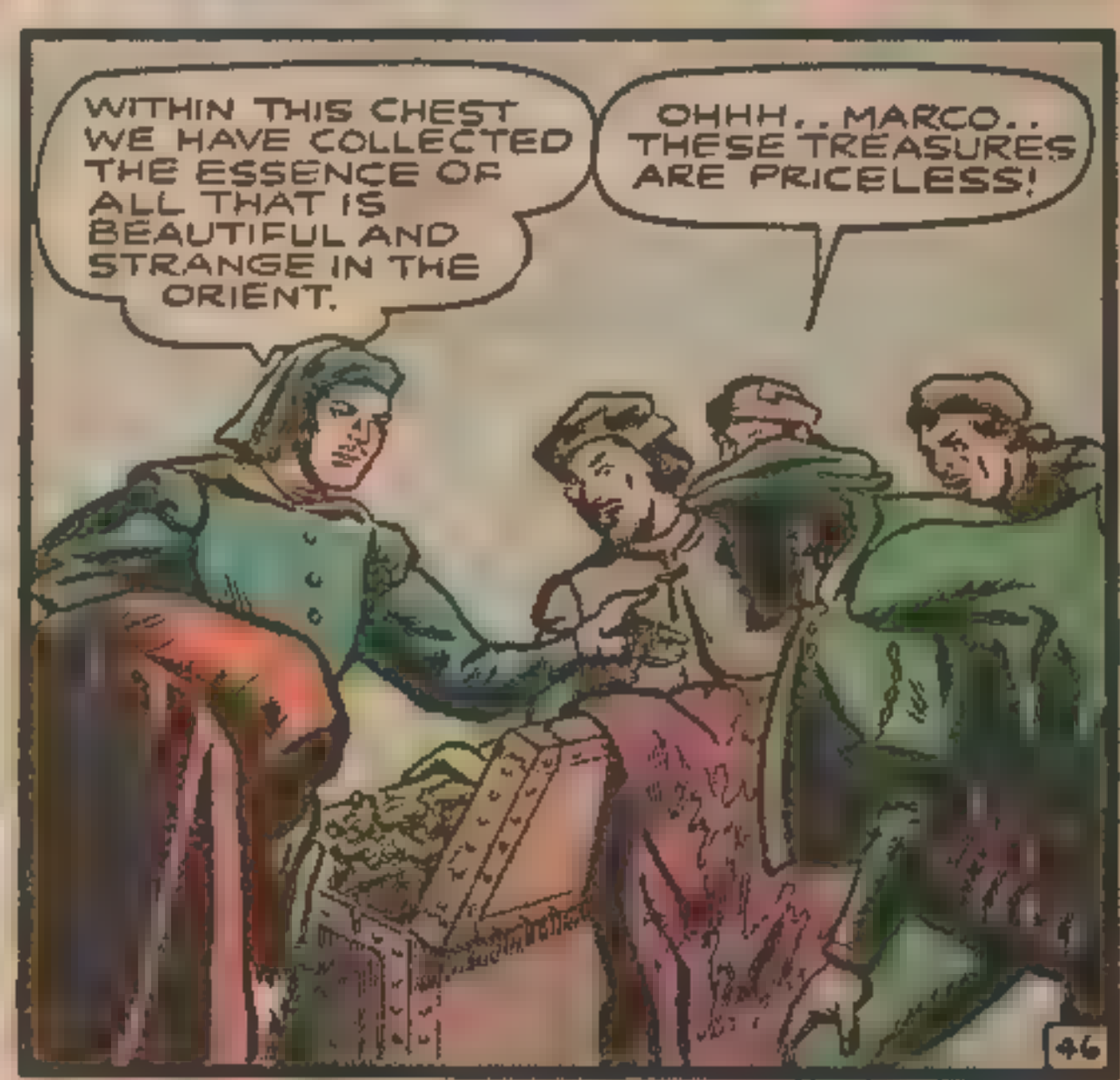
MOMENTS LATER .
THE SPY IS SECURE TILL MORNING. LET US HURRY!


AT DAWN, THE CONSPIRATORS STEAL TO THE POLO TENT. . TO FIND . . .
GONE!! LOOK. . A NOTE. IT SAYS, "THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY, CON-SPIRATORS. . BUT WE ARE NOT YET READY TO DIE. SO GOODBYE. POLO."


MONTHS LATER..THE POLOS PASS THROUGH THE DARDANELLES STRAITS..ONCE MORE ENTERING THE FAMILIAR EUROPEAN WORLD..
IT IS GOOD TO SEE CONSTANTINOPLE* AGAIN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS. IT'S TRULY SAID THAT CONSTANTINOPLE IS THE DOOR TO EUROPE.
* NOW KNOWN AS ISTANBUL.
AND SOON AFTER..VENICE. . .
IT WAS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO THAT I LEFT THIS BELOVED CITY AS A YOUTH OF EIGHTEEN. NOW..I AM A MAN OF FORTY THREE.

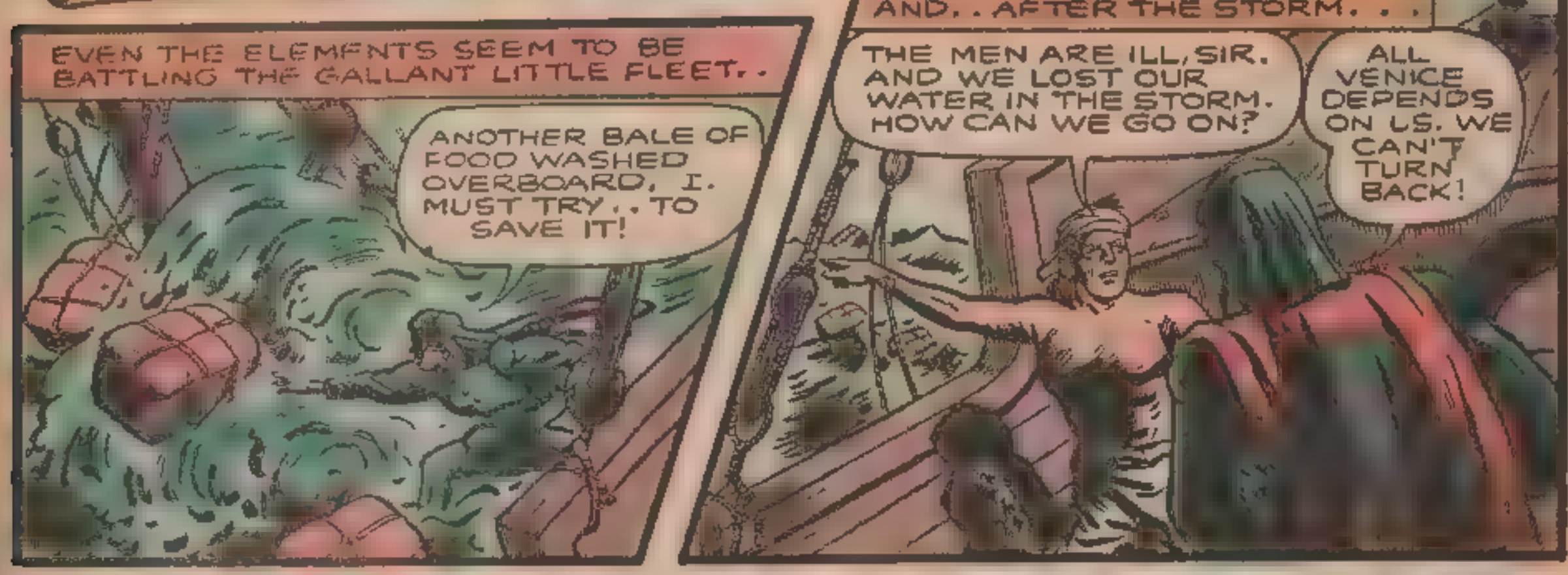

MARCO POLO..I CAN SCARCELY BELIEVE MY EYES! WHY, ALL VENICE HAD GIVEN YOU UP FOR DEAD! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
COME TO MY HOME TONIGHT AND WE SHALL TELL YOU ALL. WE WOULD REST NOW.

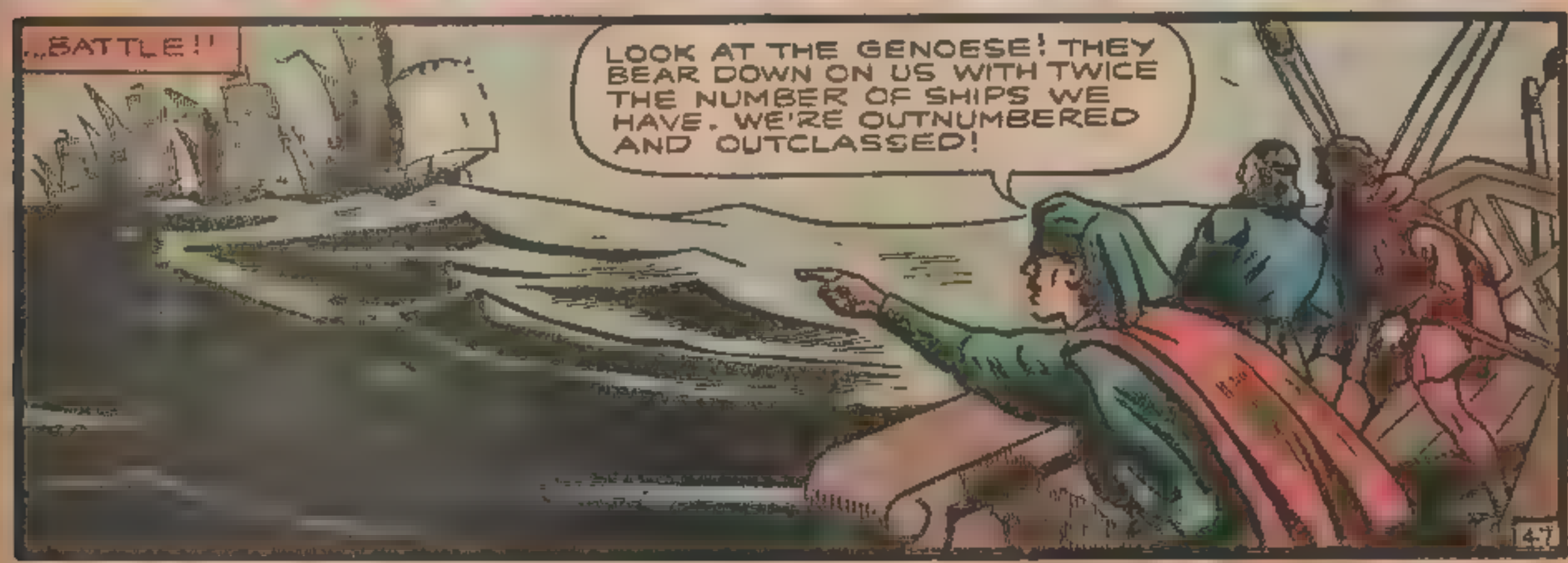

THAT NIGHT. . .
AH..THERE ARE TALES OF GREAT WONDER, WE COULD TELL.. TALES YOU WOULD HARDLY BELIEVE. SO..PERHAPS, FIRST, WE'LL SHOW YOU SOUVENIRS OF OUR JOURNEY.


WITHIN THIS CHEST WE HAVE COLLECTED THE ESSENCE OF ALL THAT IS BEAUTIFUL AND STRANGE IN THE ORIENT.
OHHH..MARCO.. THESE TREASURES ARE PRICELESS!

SUDDENLY. . .
SIGNOR!. I HAVE BEEN SENT BY THE DUKE.. WITH A MESSAGE..THERE IS WAR! WAR WITH GENOA!
WAR!? VENICE IS AT WAR!
LATER. . .
I CAME AS SOON AS I HEARD, SIRE. I HAVE TRAVELED MUCH AND KNOW THE WAYS OF THE SEA. I WISH TO VOLUNTEER.
GOOD.. WE NEED CAPTAINS FOR OUR SHIPS. BUT I MUST WARN YOU.. WE WERE NOT EXPECTING WAR, AND WE ARE FAR FROM PREPARED.

FINALLY, THE FLEET OF VENICE RECEIVES ORDERS TO MOVE...


EVEN THE ELEMENTS SEEM TO BE BATTLING THE GALLANT LITTLE FLEET..
ANOTHER BALE OF FOOD WASHED OVERBOARD, I. MUST TRY.. TO SAVE IT!
AND.. AFTER THE STORM. . .
THE MEN ARE ILL, SIR. AND WE LOST OUR WATER IN THE STORM. HOW CAN WE GO ON?
ALL VENICE DEPENDS ON US. WE CAN'T TURN BACK!


...BATTLE!!
LOOK AT THE GENOESE! THEY BEAR DOWN ON US WITH TWICE THE NUMBER OF SHIPS WE HAVE. WE'RE OUTNUMBERED AND OUTCLASSED!

FROM THE DECKS OF THE GENOESE SHIPS. . .
'TWILL BE A WARM RECEPTION FOR OUR VENETIAN FRIENDS. .
AYE. . AND THEY'LL BE WARMED TO THE BOTTOM OF THEIR HEARTS. . AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA!
HURRY! FORM BUCKET BRIGADES TO DOUSE THE FLAMES!
AYE, AYE, SIR! ALREADY ONE OF OUR SHIPS IS IN GREAT TROUBLE!
SIGNOR POLO. . WE ARE INDEED LOST NOW. TWO GENOESE SHIPS BEAR DOWN ON US!
MEN OF VENICE! SAVE US 'ERE WE DIE!
DEATH TO THE VENETIANS!
WIPE VENICE OFF THE FACE OF THE MAP!

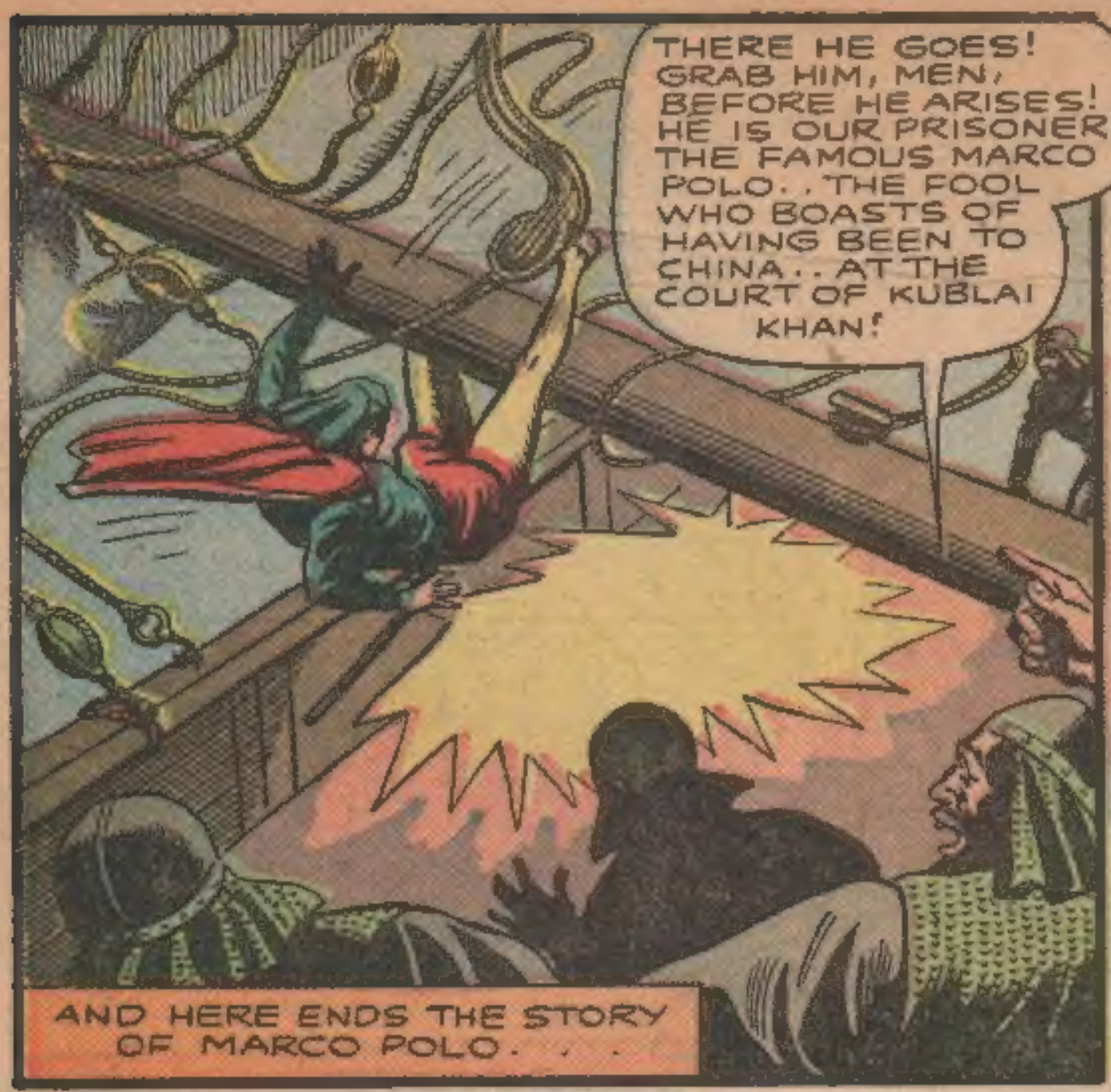
MY ARMS ARE SO HEAVY, I CAN BARELY MOVE THEM!
HAVE YOU HAD ENOUGH, VENETIANS?
WE ARE OVER-WHELMED!

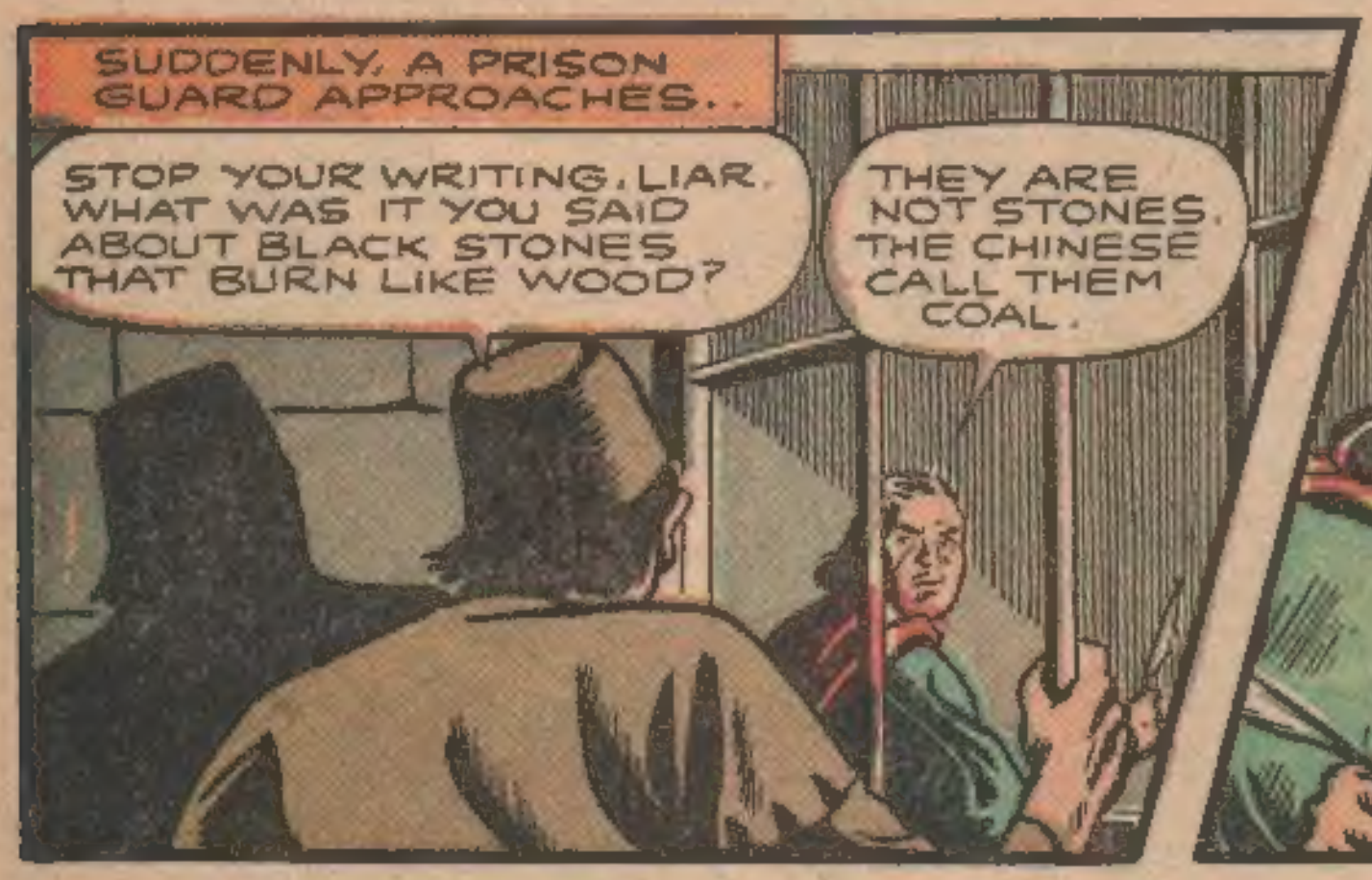
DO NOT DESPAIR, FRIENDS! DRIVE THEM BACK.. INTO THE SEA!

DESPITE THE VALOR OF MARCO POLO AND HIS MEN, THEY ARE PRESSED BACK . . .
SURRENDER, MARCO POLO..OR MY SWORD PIERCES YOUR HEART!

REFUSING TO SURRENDER, MARCO POLO CLIMBS THE MAST. . .

CHOP DOWN THE MAST AND BRING THAT VARLET TO THE DECK! HIS HARD FIGHT SHOULD EARN HIM MANY YEARS IN A DUNGEON!





IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY, MUCH OF WHAT MARCO POLO TOLD WAS NOT BELIEVED. EVEN HIS OWN FAMILY DOUBTED HIM. BUT IN MODERN TIMES, EXPLORERS HAVE RETRACED MARCO POLO'S ROUTE AND FOUND HIS STORY ACCURATE. THE WORLD HAILS THIS BRAVE MAN, THIS HONEST MAN, THE FIRST WESTERNER TO LEARN OF COAL AND HUNDREDS OF OTHER EVERY DAY COMFORTS..

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